

JEAN CABOT

in CAP and GOWN



GERTRUDE FISHER SCOTT



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JEAN CABOT
IN CAP AND GOWN

The Jean Cabot Books

BY

GERTRUDE FISHER SCOTT

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JEAN CABOT AT ASHTON

JEAN CABOT IN THE BRITISH ISLES

JEAN CABOT IN CAP AND GOWN

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.
BOSTON



AT THE UNMASKING JEAN FOUND IN THE PERSON OF PHOEBE B. A MOST ATTRACTIVE GIRL.—*Page 23.*

JEAN CABOT IN CAP AND GOWN

BY
GERTRUDE FISHER SCOTT

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR O. SCOTT



BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.


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JEAN CABOT IN CAP AND GOWN


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Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. GETTING BACK	I
II. THE GAMMA CHI "HOODANG"	15
III. "MEETING EMERGENCIES"	34
IV. POLLY THOMPSON'S TEA	52
V. ANNE COCKRAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE "CIRCLE," AND ITS RESULTS	75
VI. CALLERS	101
VII. THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER	116
VIII. THE REST OF THE VACATION, AND THE JUNIOR SURPRISE	148
IX. JUNIOR DAY	171
X. THE SENIOR DANCE	184
XI. ANNE'S AUCTION	206
XII. MAY DAYS	228
XIII. THE BEGINNING OF THE END	262
XIV. THE END OF IT ALL	294

Illustrations

At the unmasking Jean found in the person of
Phoebe B. a most attractive girl (Page 23)

Frontispiece ✓

FACING PAGE

"I've suffered, Jean, more than you know any-
thing about" 96 ✓

Jean seated herself on the tray and asked Bob
to give her a vigorous push 158 ✓

Polly shrank back still farther against the cur-
tain 182 ✓

"How much am I offered for this art museum
treasure? Start it high" 224 ✓

She had never been more beautiful than when
she walked down the stairs to greet Bob
and Dick 292 ✓

Jean Cabot in Cap and Gown

CHAPTER I

GETTING BACK

“**O**H, Anne, do please hand me that picture on the couch. It seems as though I never should get them all hung up. Thank goodness, this is the last room, and by ten o'clock to-night things will be in fairly good condition. We have hustled some in these three days, though, haven't we?”

“Well, Jean, I should say we had; and I'm just about ready to drop to the ground. I know I've never worked so hard before in all my life. But I won't complain as long as it's for Gamma Chi,” and Anne Cockran's squeaky little voice switched off into,

“Here's to Gamma Chi, Gamma Chi,
Oh, here's to Gamma Chi, Gamma Chi,”

2 JEAN CABOT IN CAP AND GOWN

And before she had finished the second line, voices from all the adjoining rooms began to join the refrain, swelling the chorus to alarming proportions.

There was good reason for this enthusiasm, for in June Gamma Chi had obtained permission from the faculty to hire a house off the campus, and with a housekeeper set up their household goods and live together as one big family. Of course, freshmen would not be invited to join them, so they would not be deprived of dormitory life with its joys and sorrows, but the upper-class girls felt that they could enjoy life much better together, and still be loyal to the college itself; for college always comes first, class second, and society third. So they had hired a large, comfortable house just off Faculty Row, and most of the girls had come back early to help clean house and settle the furniture, which had been hastily deposited there the last days of the June before. About twelve of the girls were to have rooms in the house, since a few remained loyal to favorite dormitories and certain room-mates not in Gamma Chi, and were to be con-

sidered day roomers with full privileges. Mrs. Butterfield, a former matron of Wellington Hall, had consented to keep house for the girls, and being both experienced and motherly, satisfied the faculty, who at first had looked a little askance at the idea.

Just as the girls had sung the stanza through for about the tenth time, the front door opened and shut with a bang, and Bess Johnson called out: "Oh, girls, I'm so glad to see you! Excuse my being late, but really I couldn't get here a minute sooner. You see, Dad —"

"Oh, never mind, Bess," said Anne Cockran, "we know all your excuses by heart. Just get your things off and help us finish this living-room. We're worn to a frazzle, and we must get everything done to-night."

"All right, Anne, but let me get my breath first. Why, Jean Cabot, what are you doing, perched up on that stepladder? Come down here; I'm crazy to see you. Oh, how I've enjoyed your letters this summer! With all due respect to the other girls, I must say your letters beat them all. I nearly died laughing over your descriptions of that new baby sister

4 JEAN CABOT IN CAP AND GOWN

of yours, and the boys' attempts to take care of it. I can't imagine Miss Hooper — beg pardon, I mean Mrs. Cabot — with a baby. Does she sing and talk to it in algebraic expressions and geometry propositions? Perhaps she calls it little X. Y. Z. or Q. E. D. for short."

"Oh, no, Bess, but she has named it Mary Ashton Cabot to show her devotion to the college, and declares it's coming here in 1932 or thereabouts. Where do you suppose we shall all be then? Before I forget it, girls, I want to deliver a message from Elizabeth. I ran up to Olympus for two days before I came out here. She sent her love to every one of you, and wishes with all her heart that she were back here. She means to get down sometime during the year, perhaps for initiation, but she'll be here, anyway, in June for her degree."

"Wasn't she the clever girl to do her four years' work in three? I guess she's the first Gamma Chi girl that ever did it. Has she begun teaching yet?" asked Polly Thompson, one of the juniors.

"Yes, her school began the day after Labor Day. She has to work frightfully hard, for there's only she and the principal to teach the whole school. Fortunately there are only thirty or forty pupils, but Beth has all the Latin and English and everything else that the principal can't teach. I wanted to visit her classes, but she begged me not to until next time I go up, for they're only getting started, and things are rather mixed up. However, everybody says she's doing splendid work, and I know she'll make a success of it."

"What about that good-looking brother of hers, Jean?" asked Anne.

"Oh, he's going back to Dartmouth this week. He's going to try to follow Beth's example and finish in three years, but he isn't as strong as Beth, and I don't believe he can do it. Did I tell you that he's been invited to join Theta Delta?"

"That's Mr. Bowker's fraternity, isn't it?" asked Lois Underwood with a smile.

"Yes," said Jean, and immediately changed the subject of conversation. "I've decided to go in town once or twice a week for my music,

6 JEAN CABOT IN CAP AND GOWN

so I'm not going to take a very stiff programme this year. I only need sixteen hours each semester. I think I'll try for a second honor in French. Wasn't Mlle. Franchant a dear to give me one last year! But, then, I did work hard for it."

"What about the freshmen?" asked Bess. "Who knows any of them? Has any one looked them up? I'm glad I'm not on the rushing committee this year. I got all I wanted last year, and worked myself nearly to death."

"Only a few have arrived yet; of course those who have exams are plugging away for dear life. We're on the trail of half a dozen or so. Perfect dears, all of them. And then Nat Lawton's cousin from town is coming tomorrow, and her room-mate at prep. school. We ought to get some fine new blood in Gamma Chi this year," and Anne sat down on Bess's suit-case as though thoroughly exhausted after her day's work.

"Oh, girls! What's the date of the 'hoo-dang'?" asked Bess Johnson.

"The first Monday in October," said Jean.

"And you're chairman of the committee, Bess. You'd better get to work very shortly and please don't leave everything until the last minute this time, and drive us distracted for fear you won't get things done. I know, dear, you always do things beautifully in spite of the fact that we all have nervous prostration during the preparations. Now let's call things off for to-night. Come up into my room, and have something to eat. As usual I'm nearly starved, but Mrs. Fairfax loaded me down with good things to eat, and I've been so busy I haven't found time to open the box."

"Just leave that to me, Jean," said Anne, "I'm starving, too. Has everybody tried on her cap and gown? I'm a perfect fright in mine. The cap will persist in hanging over one ear in spite of everything I can do. I shall never be a dignified senior, I know. I think I'll get some black elastic, and make a band to wear under my chin, for I simply can't pin the thing on so it will stay."

"Cheer up, Anne," cried Jean, "we're none of us 'raring, tearing beauties' in them, and I guess you look as well as the rest of us."

8 JEAN CABOT IN CAP AND GOWN

The girls crowded into Jean's single room on the second floor, which she had chosen instead of a double one, maintaining that no room-mate could ever take the place of Elizabeth Fairfax. She preferred to live alone one year to see if it really was as nice as the other girls said. She hadn't seen at first how it would be possible for her to be happy at Ashton at all without Elizabeth, but finally she had promised herself to make the best of circumstances, and have her senior year the happiest of the four.

"Why, Mrs. Fairfax must have cooked a week to get all these things ready," remarked Anne, biting first into a diminutive mince pie and then into a crisp cucumber pickle. "I never tasted anything in my life like this combination; it's divine."

"You may not think so later, Anne," said Lois Underwood, "that's a terribly risky thing to be tackling at this late hour. I see where you dream of your great grandmother's ghost and everybody else in the cemetery. Try one of these dear little frosted chocolate cakes; they're fine."

So the girls tested one after another of the tempting array of delicacies spread before them, until they declared they could not eat another thing. Most of them had worked hard for several days setting the new house to rights, and were tired, but there was so much to be talked over that it was hard to break away and go to bed. As they were leaving the room, which already showed signs of becoming a popular rendezvous for all the girls, Anne said to Jean:

“Will you go in town with me to-morrow, Jean? I want one good bat before college begins.”

“Very sorry, dear,” answered Jean, “but I’m full all day long to-morrow, and can’t possibly go off the hill, much as I’d like to. You see, in the morning I’ve got to be at the station to meet the freshmen between nine and twelve, for I’m on the Hospitality Committee. In the afternoon there’s a meeting of Student Government, and I’ve promised to go to the Inn for supper with Molly Bretton. Then in the evening Hope Freedman is having a rabbit over in Wellington for some interest-

ing freshmen relatives of hers that she wants me to meet. And in between times I ought to see Mlle. Franchant a few moments about an advanced French course. I'm thinking of taking first semester, and I promised Helen Varney I'd play a set of tennis if I possibly could."

"Haven't changed a bit, Jean, have you? Brim full of engagements as usual. Don't you remember you said last June that you wouldn't do a thing senior year but just take life easy? And here you are the very first days filling up every minute. Well, don't forget that Thursday morning you've to attend chapel exercises, and in cap and gown show to the admiring world that you're a dignified senior. In case I don't see you in the meantime, I'll say good-bye till then."

"Nonsense, Anne, you know I'll be in the house here between times, and at your disposal then, and besides, there's all the rest of the year. Good-night; see you in the morning," and she stood at the door and watched the girls disappear into their own rooms. Then she went back to her desk and sat down for a few

moments to think things over. Two things troubled her; first, she missed Elizabeth more than she ever would have believed; and second, she feared that Anne Cockran was not trying very hard to get over her disappointment at Jean's failure to room with her this year. She had always wanted her to do so, even while Elizabeth was in college, although Anne knew Jean would not have considered it then. But when she found that Elizabeth was not coming back senior year, Anne saw no reason why Jean couldn't share her room with her. Jean clung to her determination to be alone, however, in spite of Anne's arguments to the contrary. She liked Anne very much, and they had many things in common, and she did want to keep her goodwill, for more than once she had seen how uncomfortable Anne could make people, if she chose. Here then was something for her to do during the year in addition to all the other things, for she was determined that there should be nothing but harmony in the first year of the Gamma Chi House.

She had been very tired and sleepy while the

girls were in the room, but now she was wide awake, and she sat for a long, long time staring at the pictures on the little mahogany desk. Finally taking paper and pen, she began to write feverishly, and wrote far into the night. Notwithstanding this, she arose early the next morning, and carried out her full programme in every detail; making new friends, welcoming old ones, planning out work for the year, and taking up the manifold interests of college life, as though it were only yesterday, instead of three whole months before, she had dropped them.

Thursday morning brought one of those perfect, fresh, breezy fall days. After breakfast the five seniors in Gamma Chi House donned their caps and gowns, and waited, a little impatiently, it must be confessed, for the chapel bell to sound its old familiar call to service. As it began to ring, the girls started out, and all along the way met other seniors, happy to be back in the old life again, yet a little subdued at the thought that this was the beginning of the end. It was the last time they would come back on September mornings

to take up the life they loved so much; next year at this time they would all be scattered in different directions, and Ashton would go on just the same, with its continual welcoming of freshmen and graduating of seniors, year in and year out.

The ivy never shone so beautifully on the chapel tower, the music of the deep-voiced organ never impressed them so seriously, and Miss Emerson never looked more dignified or sweet than on this first morning of caps and gowns. The girls walked slowly down the aisle, took the seats which had been assigned to them in June, and waited for the service to begin. In spite of everything Jean could not keep from gazing over in the direction of the freshman seats, and remembering how three years before she had sat there in that very place, and watched the black-robed seniors take their seats. And it had seemed so impossible then that she should ever become one too, but here she was actually a senior. She was so impressed by the thought of all that had been done for her in her first year by the upper class girls that she resolved to make life

as happy as she could for some of the lonely, homesick freshmen.

She was aroused from her reverie by the tones of Miss Emerson's voice welcoming the freshmen again, just as she had done that other time so long ago; and then after the prayer and scripture reading, she turned to the seniors and congratulated them upon arriving at the beginning of that important year. Then they sang Jean's favorite hymn, "Jerusalem the Golden," and filed slowly out of the chapel, while the undergraduates stood, and looked on with admiration, and perhaps a little envy.

Still in a daze Jean lingered outside the chapel steps, and gazed at the beauty everywhere around her, until she was aroused by Bess Johnson's voice.

"Come, wake up, Jean. Aren't you going over to register?"

"Yes," Jean answered vaguely, and joining the group of waiting girls, walked with them to the office, and for the last time passed in her registration blank, and became a full-fledged senior.

CHAPTER II

THE GAMMA CHI "HOODANG"

ALTHOUGH Bess Johnson had known for a long time that she was chairman of the committee to arrange for the Gamma Chi "hoodang" for the freshmen on the first Monday in October, she put off everything as usual until the last moment. So on the day of the festivity, the rest of the girls in the house found themselves pressed into service, and obliged to work like beavers from very early in the morning until nearly supper time. This year all of the freshmen, instead of a chosen few, were invited to the "rushing," which was to take the form of a sheet and pillow case party. Each girl was asked to come dressed in a sheet and pillow case, and to wear suspended from her neck a card bearing her first name and the initial of her last name.

The house had been gayly decorated with bright autumn leaves and purple asters, and as

much as possible of the furniture was removed, so that there might be space for dancing in the living-room, dining-room and hall, which adjoined each other. The refreshments were to be served in the kitchen, but the room had been so completely transformed into a bower of dainty loveliness that one looked in vain for the kitchen range and cooking utensils usually associated with such places.

All of the house girls had worked hard, and as usual Jean had done far more than her share. Just as the clock rang out the hour of five, she slowly got down from the stepladder, after hanging a last branch of gorgeous red oak leaves from the chandelier.

“There, girls, I believe that’s the last thing in the way of decoration, and now I’m going out for a walk by myself before dinner. When I’m as tired as I am now, there’s never anything ever does me so much good as a tramp by myself. It looks pretty wonderful here, and I think we’ve done ourselves proud. But upon my soul, what a lot of work! Hope the dear little freshies well appreciate our efforts. Good-bye; if anybody wants me, tell

them I've gone to the ends of the earth, for all you know. I don't want to see or talk with a soul for an hour. When I return, I hope I'll be in a much pleasanter mood, but I'm cross as ten sticks just at present." And laughing and waving her hand at them good naturedly, Jean hurried out across the broad piazza and down the steps.

She walked away from the house as fast as she could, and choosing a short cut back of the dormitories, soon reached her favorite spot, The Willows. After walking for some distance along the road, bordered on each side by the graceful, silvery willows, she came to a little opening where there was a large flat stone almost concealed by some high bushes. It was quiet and peaceful there and Jean sat down a few moments to rest. There she became so interested in watching the beauty of the fall sunset that she did not hear the approach of two girls, who stopped just beyond where she was sitting, entirely hidden from their sight. Suddenly her reverie was broken by:

"Well, Phoebe, you haven't told me yet if

you are going to the Gamma Chi party to-night. I wish you'd go with me. Will you?"

"Why, yes, if I go, Marian, but I hardly think I shall. I'm not at all keen about it, you know. Those girls don't appeal to me much."

"Why, Phoebe! I think the girls I've met in Gamma Chi are perfectly lovely, and I'm sure we'll have a dandy time to-night. Everybody says their house is awfully attractive. It's a kind of house-warming, too, for, you see, they've only moved in this year."

"Yes, I know all about it, Marian. You can't tell me anything about Gamma Chi. I've heard all about it so many times already that I'm sick to death of the whole subject. They say the girls are awfully cliquey and regular snobs. Just because a few of them have money they think they're a little better than the rest of us. I suppose that's the real reason they've moved off the campus, to be more by themselves, and have as little as possible to do with the other girls. I, for one, hate snobbishness, and I've just about made

up my mind to stay away to-night. Why, only this morning I heard some of the upper class girls in our dormitory talking about the way some of the girls are acting this year, and they said that one of the seniors named —"

But Jean could hear no more, for the two freshmen had passed on. But what she had heard filled her with surprise and indignation. Were girls all over the campus talking about Gamma Chi and its members like this? If so, was there cause for it? Were the girls really beginning to show signs of becoming exclusive and snobbish? This was the last thought in the minds of the present seniors who the year before had been most enthusiastic over the idea of hiring a society house off the campus. If it were true, something must be done, and done at once, to change any wrong impressions which might be spreading broadcast through the college, and injuring irreparably the society which she loved so much. With these ideas crowding one upon the other, she almost ran back to the house, determined to say something to the girls at once.

But when she reached there, it was much later than she supposed, and most of the girls had finished dinner, and left the dining-room to dress, so she said nothing about her experience to the few who remained. She decided, however, to tell them all about it some time before she went to bed that night, for it weighed so heavily upon her mind that she could not let it wait until morning. She was unusually silent while she ate, but the girls attributed it to the fact that she was very tired from her exertions of the day, and after a question or two gave up any attempt at conversation, leaving the room one after another, till Jean was all alone. She sat apparently lost in thought until the little cuckoo clock in the upper hall warned her that it was half after seven, and that in an hour the freshmen would begin to arrive.

Still she seemed reluctant to leave the room. Finally Katie, the maid, came quietly in, and said that if Jean didn't hurry there wouldn't be time to clear the table and take out the furniture. This aroused her, and shaking off the depressing mood which seemed to have

taken possession of her so completely, she became herself again, and laughingly apologized to Katie for delaying her so long, at the same time beginning to take away the dishes and chairs. Jean was a rapid worker, and soon every trace of the dinner was removed, and Katie began to hustle with the dishes in the kitchen in order that everything might be put away before the arrival of the first guest. Jean gave a last lingering look at the room, adjusting decorations here and there, and then wandered slowly through the other rooms. And as she paused a moment at the foot of the stairs she said to herself, "So we're snobs, are we, and Gamma Chi is cliquey, and we think we're a little better than the rest of the girls in college? Well, if we are, we've got to begin all over again, and show ourselves to people as we really are. And the first person to be convinced is that little Phoebe. I liked her voice, in spite of what she had to say against us, and I think I can convince her that she's been mistaken in her opinion of Gamma Chi girls."

By nine o'clock the house was taxed to its

capacity by the sheeted figures of the freshmen and the society girls. Every girl wore a sheet, draped as artistically as possible about her form, slender or otherwise, as the case might be, and over her head a pillow case with holes cut for the eyes, nose and mouth, and around her neck the card bearing her name to distinguish her from all the others. The older girls circulated busily among their guests, calling them by name, and talking about college affairs in general. Then suddenly came weird sounds of ghostly music from the upper hall, and each girl seized the one nearest her and began dancing. They kept up this for an hour or so amid much merriment and laughter. Jean was the gayest of the gay, and seemed to be everywhere, introducing girls, starting dances, serving refreshments, and keeping things going pretty generally. She was looking everywhere for a girl bearing the name of Phœbe, but so far she had not succeeded in finding her, and began to fear that she had been persuaded to remain in her dormitory, as her conversation of the afternoon had threatened.

Just as she was about to give up the search, she came suddenly upon a tall, animated girl thanking her partner for a lively two-step, and glancing upon the card at her neck, Jean discovered that it bore the name, Phoebe B. In her most gracious manner Jean asked for the next dance, and at the opening chords of the music whirled her out on the floor and into the mazes of the dreamy waltz. They danced every moment until the music stopped, and were both enthusiastic over the encore, but they said hardly anything, although Jean was most anxious to get the girl to talk. The idea then came to her to have everybody remove their sheets and pillow cases at this time in order that she might see the girl who had been in her thoughts so persistently since her walk in the late afternoon. So she left Phoebe B. for a few moments while she spoke to Bess Johnson about unmasking, promising that she would be back directly, and asking the freshman to wait where she was standing.

At the unmasking Jean found in the person of Phoebe B. a most attractive girl except for a lurking sneer around her mouth, which

threatened to become a permanent fixture there, unless an attempt were made to remove it. She understood at once why Phœbe had talked as she did in the afternoon, for evidently she had a little sneering way of talking about everything that did not immediately concern her. But something in Jean must have appealed to her, for she began to talk in a most enthusiastic manner about one thing after another; when they reached the subject of Ashton, Jean found that Phœbe already had clearly defined opinions, some of which showed she had formed conclusions very hastily, and had evidently been prejudiced one way and another by other girls. As yet she had no real opinions of her own, except that she liked college, and meant to be a success.

Jean took her over the house, introduced her to all the girls of the society and to as many as possible of the freshmen whom she did not already know, and felt she had done everything in her power to show Phœbe the best side of Gamma Chi. Not because she was at all sure that she wanted her for a

future member of the society, but she did want her to see the best, and, as Jean believed, the only side of the society. After a while she left her with some of the sophomores, and busied herself with other of the freshmen, but again and again she found Phœbe at her side, or met her piercing eyes somewhere in the crowd.

At a little after eleven o'clock the party broke up, and when the last girl had said good-night and departed, Jean called the girls into the living room, and starting up a fresh fire in the fireplace, told them she wanted to talk to them before she went upstairs. Some of them were very tired, and tried to beg off, but Jean insisted that they should all stay a few minutes. Then after they had settled themselves comfortably, she began:

"Girls, as president of Gamma Chi, I feel obliged to talk with you to-night about something which has troubled me a great deal. To-day I had occasion to hear what other girls in college think about Gamma Chi and our new house off the campus. We are called rich and snobbish and exclusive, and the idea has

gone abroad that we consider ourselves a little better than most of the other girls, and that we have taken this house away from the dormitories to be by ourselves. I am grieved more than any of you know to hear such things about the society which I love so much. I ask you if these accusations are true. Are we doing things to cause such remarks? If so, I feel we are making a terrible mistake, and something must be done at once to rectify it. I am not willing to hold the position of president of Gamma Chi if these things continue. I love the society and every girl in it, but I love old Ashton better, and we must remember that we belong to the college, and ought to make that come first in our lives. Now I ask you all to help me during the weeks to come to live down the reputation we have somehow been credited with, of being exclusive and snobbish. If by Christmas there is not a different feeling existing, I shall go back to dormitory life and give up the presidency of Gamma Chi."

At once there arose indignant questions as to how Jean had found out this thing. Some

girls arose to deny the accusations, but Jean silenced them all with:

"Don't ask me any questions about it. I feel in a sense it is true, for looking back over some of the things that we have said and done in the past, I remember we have not always been as democratic as we might have been. 'Let the dead past bury its dead.' In the future, work for the best of the society and the college, and I ask for nothing more. That's all for to-night, except perhaps we'd better get the dining-room in condition for breakfast, as it will save Katie a lot of work if we do it now. And all of us together can make quick work of it. Half of us can take the dining-room and the rest the kitchen. Pull down the decorations, and put back the necessary things. Wasn't the party one grand success! But I admit that I feel like the tag end of a misspent life. We'll talk over the eligible freshmen to-morrow, but let's not be too hasty in our conclusions, for first impressions are often wrong in the case of freshmen."

The girls got to work with a will, although one or two were inclined to talk more at

length on the subject with which Jean had so startled them. It had hit home in several cases, and naturally the girls resented it for the moment, but there was no time for more talk that night, and perhaps in a few days the matter would have blown over. It took but a little while to restore order, and the tired girls went to their rooms to snatch a look at the next day's lessons, perhaps, before putting out their lights for good.

The breakfast bell rang next morning promptly at seven-fifteen, as usual, and for the next few moments the girls straggled in, one by one, until the tables were nearly filled. Naturally the talk centered on the party of the evening before, but gradually drifted from that to the numberless events of the busy week ahead about which the girls seemed to talk faster than they ate. When the meal was nearly over there came a sharp ring at the bell, and the maid came into the dining-room with a huge box for Jean. Upon opening it she found it contained a dozen American Beauty roses, and on top of these a card bearing these words:

"Thanks for the splendid time you gave me last night. Will you come to see me some time at West 38?"

"PHŒBE B."

"Well!" exclaimed Bess Johnson, "what's this? A crush so early in the year? Seems to me some one thought an awful lot of you, Jean, to get up as early as this to order American Beauties. And especially at the price they are now. Who is it? Tell us the romance."

"Why, it's Phœbe B.; that's all I know about it. We got to be good friends last night, but I neglected to ask her the rest of her name. I rather like the sound of Phœbe B. But, tell me, who knows anything about her?"

"Is it possible," asked Anne Cockran, "that you don't know who Phœbe B. is? Why, she's quite the celebrity of the freshman class. She's Phœbe Batelli. Some name, isn't it? She's the richest girl in college, and her father's a nobleman. Italian, I think, but I'm not quite sure of the nationality. Her mother is a New Englander, hence the daughter's name of Phœbe, but I think she's not living with her husband, and so the girl is being

brought up here by her mother's people. She's got money to burn, but she's an awful snob. Haven't you heard about the rumpus she had with her room-mate?"

Jean hadn't heard, neither had most of the other girls, so Anne, who always seemed to get hold of more news than all of the other seniors put together, proceeded to tell what she had heard from a friend in West only the day before.

"Why, girls, I'm surprised you haven't heard; it's all over college. You see, when Phoebe arrived, a little late, several days after registration, I believe, she found she hadn't a single room, as she expected, but was obliged to share a double in West with a sweet little Japanese girl named Tami Iami. This seemed quite impossible to the proud young Phoebe, and she immediately went to Miss Thurston, and threatened to leave college if she were forced to remain longer in the room with 'that heathen,' as she called her Japanese room-mate. In the meantime poor little Tami had found life so unpleasant in West 38 that she also had gone to Miss Emerson, and begged

for another room. Miss Emerson saw how hard life was going to be for them both under those circumstances, so she has given Tami a single by herself, and Phoebe B. is to still live in 38, but for a room-mate she has Nell Parsons. You know she flunked out last year and is repeating, and I guess she'll hold her own with Phoebe B. all right, for no one was ever known to walk over Nell!"

"Let's see," said Jean, "isn't Nell Parsons, Sigma Delta?"

When Anne replied that she was, Jean smiled, and whispered to herself, "Perhaps that accounts for it," but aloud she said, "Well, girls, this Phoebe B. interests me very much, she is very fascinating to talk to, and I believe she has great possibilities for good or bad, depending upon who gets a firm hold upon her."

"Oh," said Bess, "does that mean you hope Gamma Chi will get the hold?"

"I didn't say, Bess," replied Jean; "it's pretty early to commit one's self yet. I simply said she interested me, and I think there's a lot in her. Where shall we put these roses? I

think I'll run over with a few of them to Mlle. Franchant. She wasn't feeling very well yesterday; perhaps these will brighten her up a bit."

With these words she got up from the table, and started for the door, then remembering something she came back a little, "Oh, you seniors, don't forget there's a class meeting this noon in College. Everybody going?"

"I'm not," said Anne. "What's the use? Everything's all planned out; we won't have anything to say. None of our girls are officers or on any of the committees, consequently there's nothing doing for us. Lucky some of us are on Student Government or we'd have nothing to say about college affairs."

"Oh, Anne, please don't talk like that," returned Jean. "It's your duty to go to class meeting, and if you don't, the other girls will say what I was talking about last night, that we haven't any class spirit, and don't care for anything but ourselves. Don't let them have opportunities to talk. Bess, you're going, aren't you? And Lois, too?"

Both girls nodded their assent, and then

Jean went up to Anne, and putting her arms around her made her promise to go to class meeting, and as a pledge she tucked a beautiful great red rose in Anne's lacey shirt waist, and agreed to meet her in front of College at twelve. Then she went up to her room to look over her French before chapel, and to herself she admitted that perhaps there was some truth in the accusation against Gamma Chi, but her work for the year as president of it was to stamp out the wrong, and make Gamma Chi acknowledged as a factor for good in the college.

CHAPTER III

"MEETING EMERGENCIES"

"**J**EAN, Jean, where are you? I've been looking for you everywhere," and Polly Thompson hurried up the stairs, as Jean's voice floated down to her from the upper regions. By the time she had reached the landing on the third floor, Jean came into view, dragging several large rugs behind her with one hand, and clutching madly at numberless brushes and brooms with the other.

"Well, what on earth have you been doing, Jean?"

"Cleaning. Doesn't it look like it, Polly?"

"Yes, but who ever heard of cleaning in the middle of the afternoon, and especially such a beautiful one as this?"

"But I felt just like some exercise, and besides, my room was getting to be a positive disgrace. It's glorious out on that little piazza,

and the best place in the world to shake rugs. I wonder more people don't build them at the top of their houses for that very reason. How the wind does blow up there to-day!”

“Yes, indeed it must, judging from your appearance. My dear, the part in your hair looks like the road to riotous living.”

“Well, Polly, what a simile! You'd better spring that on Miss Whiting. I knew it looked pretty bad, but I hope it's not nearly as bad at that. But tell me, why were you in such a rush to find me? By the way you shouted, I thought the house was on fire, or something equally as exciting. What's happened?”

“Oh, I nearly forgot about the letter.”

“What letter? Tell me about it at once! I can't bear to be kept in suspense.”

“Why, Miss Emerson's maid just came to the door, and left this letter for you, and although she said she was not to wait for an answer, I felt sure if it were anything from Miss Emerson it must be very important, and you would want it at once.”

“Yes, of course, Polly, but what can Miss

Emerson be writing to me about? I was talking to her on the campus only this morning."

"Well, open it quickly and see, Jean; I'm all excited, too."

So Jean dropped the rugs and the brooms, opened the envelope, hastily read the letter, and then passed it to Polly to read.

"Oh, Jean," Polly burst out in a moment, "isn't it splendid! Invited to the first of Prexy's senior Sunday dinners! It's an honor, isn't it, for she only invites the 'celebs' and the honor girls and her favorites. And to think you should be invited to the first one! But then, why shouldn't you, Jean? Every one knows you're the —"

"There, Polly, that will do. It certainly is very kind of Miss Emerson to invite me for dinner on Sunday, and I shall be delighted to accept. But I must go right downstairs and put these rugs in place, and then answer the invitation, so Katie can take it over before dinner. Would you mind carrying down these brushes? I don't see how I ever got everything up alone."

Polly insisted upon carrying the brushes and

her share of the rugs, too. They reached the second floor in safety, and were about to enter Jean's room when Anne Cockran came up the hallway and stopped them.

“ What's up — house cleaning? ” she asked. “ That reminds me, my room ought to be done too, but I hate to do it, and always put it off till the last moment. Judging from the expression on your faces, you've been enjoying it.”

“ Yes, we have,” said Polly. “ But that isn't what makes us look so happy. We've had a surprise. Jean has just received an invitation to Prexy's first Sunday dinner for senior ‘ celebs. ’ Isn't she the fortunate girl, and aren't you proud of her? ”

“ Yes, of course,” said Anne coolly. “ Were any of the other house girls invited? ”

“ No, I guess not,” replied Polly, “ for I answered the bell myself, and the maid gave me only the one letter addressed to Jean. Why? Did you expect one, Anne? ”

“ No. Of course, if any one in this house got an invitation it would be Jean.”

“ Cheer up, Anne,” said Polly. “ You

needn't be so grumpy about it; your turn will come before very long."

"Oh, don't worry, Polly, Prexy never did have much of a crush on me," and without another word, Anne went into her own room, leaving the two girls staring at each other in astonishment.

"Why, Jean," asked Polly after a moment, "what on earth's got into Anne this year? She isn't a bit as she used to be. Do you think she's worrying about something? I wonder if she's got enough hours to graduate. I shouldn't dare ask her about it, but why don't you, Jean. She wouldn't mind it from you, she's so fond of you."

"Well, perhaps I will ask her one of these days, for I begin to suspect there is something the matter. Won't you stop a while in my room? I've a lot of new magazines for you to look at."

"No, thank you, Jean; I've a date with Betty Babcock at five and it must be nearly that time now; but, then, nobody ever expects me to be on time, I always have too much to do. Oh, by the way, Jean, I'm thinking of giving a

tea sometime next month for two of Betty's friends who are going to visit her for a few days, if I can borrow some of your tea things. You know I lost all mine last year in the fire, and haven't had the wherewithal since to stock up again. That's one of the delights of being poor.”

“ Why, surely, Polly, you're welcome to anything I have either in my room or downstairs. You know I put most of my best things in the dining-room. Shall you have your tea there or in your own room? ”

“ I think it will be lots cosier in my room, for I'm not going to have many, just a few of the juniors and seniors that Betty and I like the best. But I want it nice all the same, because these two girls go to boarding school on the Hudson, where they do the society life up in such grand style. So that's why I want some of your things, Jean; they're all so good looking. Thanks for your generous offer; I'll let you know later just when I'll want them, and of course you can consider yourself invited to the tea now. And, Jean, dear, could I borrow your sweater until dinner time, as

long as you're not going to use it. I tried to cleanse my white one last Saturday, but it shrunk so I positively can't get it on. There, the clock's striking five now. What did I tell you? Of course I'll be late, for I promised to meet Betty at the Inn. Thanks so much for the sweater! See you at dinner." And pulling on the sweater which Jean handed her, she rushed out of the room, down the stairs, and out of the front door, shutting it after her with a bang.

Left to herself, Jean arranged the rugs, and then slowly dressed for dinner before sitting down at her desk to answer Miss Emerson's invitation. She felt very happy indeed that she had been thus honored, but her happiness had been marred a little by Anne's jealous remarks, and she wished she might have been invited, too. More than that, however, she wished she might do something to restore Anne's former good nature, which seemed to be rapidly disappearing, changing her into an entirely different girl. It did not take long to write the note of acceptance, and send it by Katie. She was always willing to do errands

for the girls, who rewarded her liberally with money and bits of discarded finery. Then Jean had three days to anticipate.

Sunday was a drizzly November day, but the weather could not dampen Jean's spirits, and putting on her rubber coat over the new silk dinner dress which had arrived from Boston only the day before, she scorned umbrella and hat and hurried down Faculty Row. A glance at the clock on College Hall told her that it was already quarter of one, and dinner was served at one o'clock. Halfway down the Row she overtook Mlle. Franchant, and was delighted to find that she was also going to the dinner. These two were the last to arrive, and after they had taken off their raincoats they were greeted most cordially by Miss Emerson and Miss Thurston and the five other seniors.

Jean had not even heard what other girls were invited, so she looked eagerly at them, and discovered Phyllis Woodworth, class president; Mary Williamson, president of Student Government; Eleanor Whitcomb, editor of the *Ashton Literary Circle*; Dorothy Baxter, leader of the Glee Club; and Ruth Bliss, who

held no class or college office, but was one of those quiet, unobtrusive girls whom everybody loved without quite knowing the reason why. There was plenty to talk about, because they all knew each other so well, and Miss Emerson had the happy faculty of always making her guests feel at ease at once.

After a few moments they went into the dining-room, where they thoroughly enjoyed the simple but dignified repast spread before them. Then there was music in the little music room, which held just about this number of guests comfortably. Miss Emerson played herself, and was passionately fond of music, and always delighted when her guests either played or sang. Dorothy Baxter sang several songs to Jean's accompaniment, but they were the only ones that day who could play or sing. So when Miss Emerson asked Jean to play, she went to the piano, and softly began one of Beethoven's sonatas. The instrument was in perfect tune, and Jean just in the right mood. Surrounded by sympathetic listeners, she played on for almost an hour without interruption; then quietly arose and apologized for

seeming so completely to have forgotten herself and her surroundings. But it had been a rare treat for the others, who, although they knew Jean played well, and was studying both the piano and organ in Boston, suspected nothing of her real ability, for it was seldom that she revealed herself as she had to-day. They begged her to continue, but she refused, saying that she felt she had already played too long.

There was no more music, and the conversation became general until one of the girls rose to go. As the others began to follow her example, Miss Emerson came up to Jean and asked her to remain a little longer, as she wished to talk with her about a little matter which would not interest the other girls. So, in a few moments, Jean found herself alone with Miss Emerson in the little study upstairs, where a cheery fire blazed in the fireplace.

“ It’s about vespers, Jean, that I want to talk with you,” began Miss Emerson. “ You know, of course, that our regular college vespers begin to-night, and continue every second week throughout the winter and spring. I

have just returned from a business trip to some of the colleges in the Middle West, where I have been getting speakers and ideas for our own services. At one of the society houses in Chicago where I was entertained, I was impressed by something they did there that I want to ask you to try in your society house. Every other Sunday the college has its regular vespers in the chapel, as we do here, and then on the other Sundays the girls in the society houses hold what they call 'house vespers.' They have a short musical service and a talk by some member of the faculty. There seemed to be a splendid spirit among the girls, and I believe it is worth trying here. I look upon Gamma Chi as a splendid example of a college society, and I am proud to be an honorary member, and I believe if you set the example in this matter of Sunday house vespers, the other societies will follow your lead, and then later, perhaps, we can institute the same in the dormitories. It seems to me that it will bring the girls closer together than any other thing could possibly do. If you care to try the experiment, I shall be only too glad to

be the first to talk to the girls, and I am sure you have enough talent among yourselves for endless musical programmes. Don't decide to-day, but talk it over with your girls, and let me know later on in the week.”

“ Thank you for offering to talk to us, Miss Emerson ; it is always an honor and a pleasure to have you with us. I will talk the matter over with the girls, and let you know their decision at once. I think it is a splendid idea, and I'm willing to do all I can to make it a success.”

“ Then it's future is assured,” said Miss Emerson, “ for everything you undertake succeeds. Excuse me just one moment, dear. I hear the telephone in the hall, and I fear there's no one else upstairs to answer it.”

“ Certainly,” said Jean ; and she watched the tall, slender figure in its soft gray dress disappear in the adjoining hallway, and thought how much she had come to respect and love this woman in her four years at Ashton.

But when Miss Emerson stepped into the room again after perhaps five minutes' absence, her face was a little flushed, and had one been

a keen observer, one might even have detected a shade of disappointment there. But she quietly seated herself again near Jean and said, "Let's see, dear; what were we saying?"

"We were talking about the house vespers," answered Jean.

"Oh, yes, of course, and you had promised me to speak about them to the girls. Well, I seem to be asking several favors of you to-day, for circumstances force me to ask another so soon. This time I am going to ask you if you will play the organ to-night at vespers. I have just received a telephone message that Professor Leighton will be unable to take charge, as he was suddenly taken ill this noon, and immediately ordered by his physician to the hospital for an operation for appendicitis. I am especially anxious for good music to-night, because our speaker is Dean Townsend of Woodston College, and I know of no one else who can do as well as you. I have been deeply impressed by your playing this afternoon, and as you are studying the organ with Professor Leighton, I feel confident you can do as well on that as on the piano."

“ Oh, Miss Emerson,” cried Jean, “ I couldn’t play for vespers; I’ve only been studying the organ for two years and I’ve never played in public in my life. Isn’t there some one else you can think of? I dislike to refuse you, but, really, what you ask is impossible.”

“ Nothing is impossible, my dear, if once we make up our minds to it. I am sure you can take charge of the music, or I should not have asked you to do so. Of course the choir have rehearsed their songs several times and the accompaniments will be easy, so if you will choose a few of your simplest selections to play during the fifteen minutes before the service begins, that is all that will be necessary. Please don’t refuse, for if you cannot help me with the music I shall feel obliged to give up the service, and that would be a great disappointment to me.”

“ Very well, Miss Emerson, I will do my best, but I fear you have too much confidence in me. If you will excuse me now, I will hurry back to the house to get some of my music, and then go over to the chapel to prac-

tice. There is quite a little time yet before the service."

As Jean hastened down the Row, the thought flashed across her mind that this was the vesper service to which she had invited Bob Bowker, who had reached home only the week before from a summer at the University of Berlin, and who now was to begin his work at Harvard as an instructor in English. Her first idea was to telephone him to postpone his call until later, but then she decided that as he was probably already on his way out there, that would do no good. Then, too, she was very anxious to see him, for it had been a long time since Class Day the June before, when he had been her guest, and letters, especially foreign ones, are such inadequate things. She wondered what he would think when he arrived at the house and found her gone. But she would write him a note to explain, and she hoped he was sensible enough to understand. Then she would ask Polly Thompson to entertain him, and take him to vespers with her, and as soon as the service was over, she could meet them and invite him to the house for supper. It was

her turn to have a guest, consequently she would have to take no part in preparing the meal.

She slipped quietly into the house, without any of the girls seeing her, and went directly to her own room. She hastily wrote a note to Bob, gathered up some of her music, took out her cap and gown, and then went over to Polly's room, and fortunately found her alone. It did not take long to tell her the plans, and pledging her to secrecy, she left the house as quietly as she had entered, and hastened to the chapel.

There was surprise on every side when the service began, and one by one the girls discovered that Jean Cabot was playing the great organ. It was the first time that they remembered hearing any one but Professor Leighton play it. She sat there in her cap and gown apparently as calm and as much at home, as though she were playing the piano at the society house. No one suspected that she was having a struggle to control her nervousness, which threatened several times to get complete possession of her, for the music that filled the

chapel was like an inspiration to the many listeners. During the short sermon when Jean left the organ and sat behind the choir, she gazed out into the sea of faces before her, and was not long in locating Polly and Bob in one of the front rows. In the first glance of recognition she was sure she read also a look of approval at what she had done, and she realized that Bob was not displeased at what might have seemed her desertion of him.

Dean Townsend's subject was: "Meeting Emergencies," and he presented it in such a simple, straightforward manner that it made a deep impression upon every one who heard him. At the close of the service, after the last note of the Recessional died away, and the organ had been closed, Jean started to leave the choir loft, but she heard some one softly calling her name. Turning in the direction from whence the sound came, she saw Miss Emerson and Dean Townsend standing close to the rail. As she went up to them, Miss Emerson introduced her to the distinguished speaker and then added, "I wanted you to

know at least one Ashton girl who has had some experience in meeting emergencies.”

And then pressing Jean's hand, she said softly, “Thank you, Jean, for what you have done to-night.”

And as Jean walked slowly down the stairs to meet Bob and Polly she felt that indeed it had been worth while.

CHAPTER IV

POLLY THOMPSON'S TEA

IN some unaccountable way Jean had caught cold, it developed into the grip, and she had been forced, much against her will, to remain in bed several days, which, as she afterward said, were days of torture, for she never remembered being sick enough before to have to go to bed. She was a little humiliated, too, because she had hitherto prided herself upon the fact that during her entire college course, she had had neither an ache nor a pain, excepting perhaps a little mental pain she may have suffered annually around examination time. When she was over the worst of it, and managed to "crawl round," as she said, the college doctor suggested that she sign off, and go away from the hill for a few days, to visit some friends, if she could find any who were longing for company just then.

Jean could think of plenty of places to go, but the one which appealed to her most was the home of her cousin, Anna Maitlandt, or to be more exact, perhaps one should have said Anna Maitlandt Robertson. Although Anna had graduated high in her class at the Massachusetts General Hospital that very fall, she had not done any actual nursing, for the day following her graduation her engagement was announced to Dr. John Robertson, a rising young surgeon, whom she had met during her hospital work, and shortly after they were quietly married, and were now living in Boston in a small apartment house. Anna had written Jean several times urging her to visit them over week-ends, but so far Jean had had no opportunity. Now this was the very time, for she really needed real care and nursing; and with a doctor and trained nurse to look after her, there would be no reason in the world why she shouldn't improve rapidly. She telephoned to Anna, and found it would be perfectly convenient for her to go there. Anna further insisted that she should go out to Ashton after Jean the next day in the doc-

tor's electric runabout, which she had learned to run.

So on Friday morning Jean struggled into some clothes, and with the help of Anne and Polly tried to make herself presentable, in spite of her pale cheeks and heavy eyes, which were unmistakable evidences of her recent illness. Her bag was packed, and her coat and hat were on, for Anna was to arrive about eleven, and it was that already. She sat down in a low chair by the window to catch the first sight of the machine as it came up the street.

"Now, girls," she said, "make yourselves perfectly at home in here while I'm gone. Here's a box of candy you can finish at your leisure; and those flowers you can take into your rooms if you care to. I've chosen the freshest ones to take over to Anna, but some that are left are still beautiful. Wasn't it thoughtful of Phoebe Batelli to send me those lilies and orchids? She's always doing something nice for me in spite of the fact that she's pledged to Sigma Delta. From what I hear, she seems to be improving wonderfully in all directions. I guess college is just what she

needed to make a real girl of her. Polly, won't you take these orchids?"

"Yes, with much thanks, but I notice you aren't giving away any of those dark red carnations. You always have some of those in your room, Jean. Some one must send them to you regularly, I think, or have you a standing order with the florist?"

"Why — er — yes — they are sent to me every Monday morning."

"Of course one couldn't guess who sends them," said Polly laughing, "but there, I didn't mean to bother you. All I've got to say is that I like his taste, for certainly the dark red ones are the most beautiful."

While Polly and Jean were talking about the flowers, Anne had been walking restlessly round the room, looking at one thing after another. Finally as she stopped before the bookcase, she exclaimed, "Why, Jean, what on earth are these piles of papers on this lower shelf?"

"Those," answered Jean, "why those are my English themes, all that I've ever written since I've been at Ashton, excepting, of course,

those which were never corrected, and consequently never returned. At first I saved them just for a joke, and then later the idea came to me to save them seriously, and see at the end of the four years what I had written and how much I had improved. I used to hate to write themes, but now I'm getting positively fond of it, and once in a while I get some quite decent marks and criticisms on them. If I had time I think I'd try for the 'Circle,' but I can't do everything.

"Isn't that a 'honk, honk,' in front of the house? I meant to watch out of this window, but I've been talking so much, I forgot all about it. I guess I must be improving rapidly, for it seems good to talk again, and when I was in bed I didn't care if I never talked with anybody, it hurt my throat so. Polly, please run into the other room, and see if Anna is waiting. I don't want to go out in the air until I have to."

Polly was back in a moment, and reported that Anna was just getting out of the machine and coming into the house. The three girls hurried downstairs to meet her. As Anna was

an old Gamma Chi girl, and had not seen the new house, she was delighted to be shown over the rooms downstairs and declared she wished she were back again to enjoy all this new splendor. They tried to prevail upon her to stay longer that day, but she was anxious to get Jean to her home as soon as possible, but she promised either to return with Jean, or come out for initiation, which would be sometime within the next two weeks, provided Jean returned to college. As the two settled themselves comfortably in the little runabout and were on the point of starting, Polly exclaimed:

“Oh, Jean, how long will you be gone? If Betty Babcock's friends should arrive while you were away, and I decided to have my tea I told you about, would you mind if I used some of your things?”

“Why, of course not, Polly. As I said before, take anything you want. I shall be very sorry to miss your tea, but perhaps I shan't have to.”

And as they started away Polly called out again, “How about the dark red carnations, Jean?”

"Oh, please take care of them for me. That is, if any come," and Jean smiled in such a peculiar manner that Polly felt sure that next week the dark red carnations would be delivered in person instead of sent out to Ashton by express.

Jean's recovery at her cousin's home was rapid. The change did her a world of good, and the excellent care she received soon banished every indication of her recent attack of grip. By the following Wednesday she declared she was herself again, and must return to college, for she had already missed so much that she dreaded the thought of making it all up.

"But," questioned Dr. Robertson at the breakfast table that morning, where they were discussing the subject, "aren't you a senior, and won't they make concessions to a senior, they used to do so 'way back in my college days."

"Yes," replied Jean, "probably they will, but I'm trying for honors in French this year, and am doing extra work with Mlle. Franchant. You know I never was cut out for a

grind, so with all my other work it comes pretty hard."

"Jean Cabot!" said Anna with a little scream, "you trying for honors in French! It does my heart good to hear it, for I haven't forgotten how you talked about studying and lessons when you first came to college; and you laughed a little at my old-fashioned ideas, as you probably called them then, of what a college education would do for a girl. I thought then that sooner or later you'd come round to my way of thinking, and I can see now that you have. Tell me, have you thought anything about what you will do after college is over? I hope you will keep on with your music, you love it so."

"Perhaps she will do just what certain other young ladies I know of have done upon receiving their much-coveted diplomas. From all appearances, it looks a little suspicious," and Dr. John continued to eat his grape-fruit with a knowing smile.

"But, John, dear, you needn't say one word. You know I wanted to nurse for a year, but you wouldn't listen to it," put in Anna quickly.

“ Well, of all things, Nan, I didn’t say you were one of those certain young ladies, did I? Oh, I forgot to tell you that I have an important meeting of the Medical Club to-night, and after that I may have to stay all night at the hospital, because we may have to perform another operation on Mrs. Morton. She’s in a pretty serious condition. So why don’t you stay out at College to-night with Jean? You’ve been wanting to go out all the fall, and here’s a first-rate opportunity.”

“ So you want to get rid of me, do you? Well, I think I’ll go then, if Jean will invite me to stay with her. I had planned to go out to initiation next week, but I really prefer this, for I can see more of the girls than I could in the rush and excitement of initiation. When shall we start, Jean? John will be using the machine, so we shall be obliged to depend upon the trains to-day.”

“ I have a little shopping I’d like to do this morning, so we might have an early lunch at the Tea Room, and then take the first afternoon train out, if it is agreeable to you. Then I shall have plenty of time to get my work

straightened out, and I'll sign on and begin work to-morrow morning. I shall be ready to start any time you say, but if you'll excuse me now, I'll just write one short note to mail when we go down-town."

"Yes, cousin," put in Dr. John, "be sure and make it short, but sweet. Is it to — er — you know, I've forgotten his name. Same old story." And the doctor hurried away to his office, where a patient already awaited him.

It was a bracing November morning, good to be out in, and the two girls enjoyed every minute of it, and carried out all the plans they had made at the breakfast table except that they were a little later in reaching the hill than they had expected. But about half-past three they might have been seen walking leisurely up the Row and then down Longwood Avenue in the direction of the Gamma Chi house.

"If you don't mind, Jean," said Anna, "I think I'll not do much visiting or sightseeing until the last part of the afternoon, I've got a bit of a headache, but I think if I lie down for an hour or so, I'll be all right. You go right on doing what you had planned, and don't let

me interfere. All I ask for is your couch where I can curl up for a little while and sleep it off."

"Oh, I'm terribly sorry, Anna, I never imagined you had headaches, but we'll make the couch as comfy as possible, and I hope you'll feel better by five. We'll run over and call on Mlle. Franchant then, if you like, for I know you're very fond of her and she of you. Here we are at Gamma Chi house, and although I've enjoyed every minute of my visit with you, it does seem good to be back. Let's go right up to my room, unless some of the girls see us first and stop us. Generally there's no one in the house at this time of day, anyway, so I think we're safe. Why, I wonder what's the matter with Polly Thompson; all the curtains are down in her room. I hope she didn't catch my cold, and take to her bed, too."

Fortunately there were only two of the sophomores in the living-room. They did not know Anna, so Jean did not feel obliged to stop then and introduce them. She waved her hand to them as they said they were glad to

see her back again, and then started up the stairs ahead of Anna. She hurried along the hall until she came to her own room, and then turning to her cousin said, "Welcome, cousin, to Cabot Lodge," and threw open the door. But as she did so, she gave a little scream of surprise, and then burst out laughing, "Well, cousin, walk into my lodge. It isn't exactly as I left it, but I guess Polly Thompson decided to have her tea to-day, and acted on my suggestion to help herself freely to anything there was in the room. She has left one or two pieces of furniture, but that's about all. And the one thing we want most of all, the couch, is gone. However, we'll go right over into Lois Underwood's room and you can lie down there. Then after the tea is over I'll try to restore order and the necessities of living for the comfort of my guest.

"Perhaps if you want to see my things first hand, it would be better to go right into Polly's room now. I confess I don't see where she possibly could find a place for half the things she's taken from here. The list of the missing articles includes couch, tea-table and all its fix-

ings, wicker chairs, jardinier, fern, pictures from the wall and my dresser, rugs, ivory toilet set, books, chafing-dish, and probably as many more things that I don't see at first glance. I don't understand why she didn't have the tea in here, except that it's not nearly as large as her room. You see, hers was originally intended for a double, but at the last moment Grace Greenwood decided to stay in Wellington, and that left Polly in a big room without any one to share it with her. So as her furniture did not go far toward filling the room, she evidently felt the need of mine. I'm sorry there isn't even a chair for you to sit in. How do you feel now?"

"Very much better, Jean, and I'm so interested in this tea of Polly's that I think I'll not lie down, after all, particularly as there is no soft, downy couch at hand. But I'll go with you to the tea, and see how grand and festive Polly's room is. Shall I change my waist? I brought a chiffon one in my bag, for I knew that after a morning's shopping this white one would be too soiled for dinner. Shall you dress up?"

"No, not much. Perhaps I'll wear the dark blue silk I bought recently at Hollander's. I wore it to Miss Emerson's dinner, and haven't had it on since. Hang your coat and hat in the closet. Never mind if you have to put the rest of the things on the floor for the time being; we'll straighten that out later."

As Jean went to the closet to take down her new blue dress, she seemed to have some difficulty in finding that particular gown, and finally exclaimed:

"Well, Anna, I verily believe Polly is wearing my new dress. I can't find it anywhere, and there is unmistakable evidence that some one has been in this closet. Perhaps in passing I ought to explain that in addition to the fact that Polly is an inveterate borrower, her guests to-day are two girls from a fashionable boarding school on the Hudson, and Polly is very desirous of making a good impression upon them, even though it be in borrowed finery. Polly is a dear, but sometimes she carries things a little too far without realizing it. She'll have to learn her lesson some day, like all the rest of us. Well, as long as I haven't

my blue dress to wear, I suppose I'll have to find something else."

"I guess there's no danger but that you have enough to choose from. Please wear something pretty, for I do enjoy seeing your clothes; they always seem to have a style of their own."

"Thanks, Nan, I'll wear this little striped silk that I got in New York when I came through there in September. Connie knows all the best shops, and, next to you, is the best person in the world to go shopping with. Can you imagine Connie and Tom with a little daughter almost a year old? Won't my family have the grand reunion at Christmas time! We're all going to Tom's, and Dad and Mother and baby may come on for the rest of the winter and my graduation. Can I help you in any way? Perhaps we'd better start as soon as we can, or the distinguished guests may be leaving."

As they neared Polly's room at the end of the hall sounds of much laughter and merriment floated out to them. Jean knocked softly on the door. When Polly opened it she

looked at Jean and Anna with astonishment written large in every feature of her flushed face, and then gasped:

“ Oh, I'm so glad you've come. It seems so good to have you back again, Jean, but I didn't expect you to-day. Why didn't you let us know when you were coming? ” And she ushered the last two arrivals into the room, and introduced them to the two guests of honor,— who, after all, seemed like very ordinary young ladies,—and to the dozen or so other girls seated round the room.

It was certainly a most attractive tea, and all that the most fastidious could have desired. Jean marveled at the transformation of the room and at the calmness with which Polly dispensed her hospitality. She made a striking picture in Jean's blue silk dress with a string of tiny pearls,—which Jean remembered belonged to Anne Cockran,—round her slender neck, as she presided over the wicker tea table with its delicate Minton tea-set and heavy Colonial silver. In the center was a tall green Japanese vase, and to Jean's astonishment it was filled, as usual, with dark red

carnations. She concluded they must have arrived only a few hours before. Everywhere round the room were her things, her treasures, even to a certain silver picture frame containing the picture of a certain young man. This was too much; Polly might have left that; but, then, the face of the young man was good to look upon, and she could not deny that it did show up well on Polly's new birds'-eye-maple dresser. Polly herself was all animation, all happiness — and apparently all unconscious of the liberties she had taken with Jean's room.

After tea and cakes had been passed several times, the girls began to depart. Jean and Anna went among the first, for they intended to call on Mlle. Franchant and Miss Emerson and others of the faculty whom Anna had enjoyed while she was in college. They found Mlle. Franchant just in the act of preparing supper in her own room that night, instead of going to the dining-room downstairs. She prevailed upon the girls to stay and eat with her, although they protested they had been to a tea, and could not eat another thing; but the dainty meal she had prepared appealed to them,

and they did full justice to it. After they had finished Mademoiselle began to tell them of her visit the summer before to the home of her only brother in Switzerland, and she had so many photographs to show them that before they realized it, nine o'clock struck, and they had made only one of the several calls they had planned.

It was hard, as was always the case with Mlle. Franchant's callers, to tear themselves away from this charming Frenchwoman, but they managed to at last, and went for a few moments to Miss Emerson's. There they found several of the faculty, and, as it happened, the very ones Anna wished most to see again, so they remained until five minutes of ten, when the others left.

At the society house, most of the girls had retired, but a few were sitting before the fire awaiting Jean's return. She was glad to introduce Anna to them, for only the older girls knew her by reputation as one of the famous old girls back in the days when Gamma Chi was first formed. Polly was nowhere to be seen. Jean wondered about it, and made up

her mind to hunt her up and tell her how much they had enjoyed her tea. But first her room must be put in order for the night; she did hope Polly had brought back the couch and the chairs, even if the other things were left until morning, or some later date, as most things were that Polly ever borrowed. She had been keenly disappointed in the afternoon that Anna could not see her room in its usual appearance, for she was a little proud of it. As she opened the door now, however, all her disappointment of the afternoon fled. The room was restored to perfect order, even to the dark red carnations in the green vase on the table, and she could not find one thing out of place.

With much delight she ushered Anna in, who exclaimed at once, "What a transformation! I never would have believed it possible. Why, that child must have worked every minute after the girls left her room. I must congratulate you on the room, Jean; it is perfect, no more need be said. I remember telling you way back in freshman days that the keynote of attractive college rooms was simplicity; and this room is the very embodiment of those

principles I sought to impress upon you. Now, if you don't mind, I'm going straight to bed. I suppose that couches haven't changed a bit, and we two are to share that roomy one of yours. How it brings dormitory life all back to one, and what a happy life it is!"

"Yes, Nan, that's our resting-place for to-night, but before I join you I want to run down to Polly's room a minute to tell her how much we enjoyed her party. Don't wait for me, for sometimes when Polly and I get to talking it takes some time to finish all we have to say."

The hall was dark, for it was time for lights to be out, and as Jean paused in front of Polly's door, she could not see a ray of light. Still she knocked softly, and was not surprised when a voice told her to come in. There sat Polly in her kimono, huddled up by the window.

"Oh, Jean, I was afraid you wouldn't come, and I wanted to talk with you so badly. I've waited so long I was about discouraged, but I didn't want to go to your room while you had company. Oh, I'm so sorry about this afternoon! I never was so ashamed or so hu-

miliated in all my life as I was when you came into my room and discovered what I'd done. To think that when you'd been generous enough to offer me all your best china and silver I should have taken everything else in the room, even to your clothes and pictures, and paraded them as my own! Well, I've learned my lesson, and one I shall never forget, and I've made a solemn vow never again to borrow things. If I haven't enough of my own, I'll go without! If you'll only forgive me this time and promise to say nothing about it, I promise you that I'll try my level best to improve in the future. My tea was a dismal failure, and I know the girls didn't even look at the room or my dress, and they weren't at all what I thought they'd be, and would have enjoyed it just as much if I'd had it in my room just as it was without doing anything extra. What would they think of me if they knew what I really did! But I don't care anything about what they think; it's what you think that really counts."

"Well, Polly, I think that perhaps you did borrow a little too much this afternoon, and

that as a general rule borrowing is not a satisfactory habit, but I also think that you've broken yourself of the habit now, and that is worth more than anything else. I came in to tell you how much Anna and I enjoyed the tea and meeting the girls, and also to thank you for putting everything back so nicely. May I ask if you remember when the carnations came?"

"It was just as I was taking the last thing out of your room. Katie brought them upstairs and I felt sure you would want me to put them in water; so I took them into my own room and put them in the vase you always use for them. Speaking of the carnations, Jean, please don't tell him about this afternoon's performance, for I know it would make him perfectly disgusted with me, and I like him so much.

"Oh, by the way, Jean, what do you think I found pinned under the lace of your blue silk dress? I know I ought not to have seen it, but I might as well confess the truth to you. Does that little fraternity pin mean anything, Jean?"

“Of course not, Polly, but please forget that you ever saw it there. Now good-night; pleasant dreams,” and Jean was gone before Polly could say another word.

CHAPTER V

ANNE COCKRAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE "CIRCLE," AND ITS RESULTS

JEAN was very much disappointed that Elizabeth could not come down for initiation. Her school duties were so many and so difficult that it was out of the question just then, but she promised to come later on in the year. Initiation was a grand success, and four freshmen and two sophomores were initiated into the mysteries of Gamma Chi. The following week came Thanksgiving recess and Rosalie Warner, one of the juniors, took Jean and two sophomores, Darthia Danielson and Barbara Lane, home with her to Brooklyn.

The Warner family was a large one, and one good time followed another during the vacation, for Rosalie was determined that the girls should enjoy every waking moment from Wednesday evening until Monday morning.

The girls arrived in Boston again Monday noon, and as Jean had no afternoon recitations, she decided to leave the others and spend the afternoon with Natalie Lawton, who, after two years in France, was spending this winter at home. Fortunately she found Natalie in, but just on the point of starting for a tea and an art exhibit. Nothing would do, therefore, but that Jean must accompany her with the promise of returning to the Lawton home for dinner. So the two set out for a happy time together.

It was almost nine o'clock when Jean reached Gamma Chi House, and stopping for a few moments in the living room to greet the girls, she hurried to her own room. She was very tired after her strenuous four days of "society doings," and had some lessons to look over that evening, as she had recitations every hour Tuesday morning. Just as she reached her room, the door opened, and Anne Cockran came out with an English notebook under one arm. As Jean greeted her, Anne's pale face seemed to grow several shades paler, and she stammered,

“Why — Jean — it's good to see you again. Welcome home! I went into your room to see if you'd arrived. Rosalie said you were coming out early. When I found you weren't there, I used your dictionary a few minutes, for I haven't any, and I needed one for some English work that's due to-morrow. Oh, how I hate these everlasting themes! They haunt me night and day, and it seems as though there was always one due, in spite of my efforts. This trying to carry two English courses isn't all that it's cracked up to be.”

“You look very tired, Anne; I'm afraid you didn't rest much during vacation.”

“No, I didn't. I came back Friday afternoon to make up some work, but I didn't get much done. I suppose you've had one grand good time; you always do, no matter where you go. I wish I could have you visit me sometime, but this living in a hotel the way we do rather cuts out that sort of thing. I'll be thankful if Father ever can settle down so that we can really live. He's just started for Russia, and probably we won't see him for a year. What kind of a time did you have?”

“Grand,” answered Jean with a tired note in her voice, “but if you don’t mind I’ll tell you about it to-morrow, for I’m dead to the world to-night, and I must look over Lit. and French. Come in, won’t you?”

“No, thank you, Jean; I’ve a lot of work to do, too. Good-night,” and Anne hurried towards her own room.

After Jean had closed her door, and switched on the light she unpacked her suitcase, and decided to let the steamer trunk, which had preceded her, wait until the next day. Partially undressing she put on a warm bathrobe, and sat down at her desk to begin work. Before long she needed a certain reference book which was in her bookcase, and in getting it she discovered a dainty white handkerchief just in front of the bookcase. In one corner she found the embroidered initials “A. C.,” and knew in a minute that Anne must have dropped it on her way out. Thinking that she might forget all about it if she left it until morning to return, she hastened over to Anne’s room. Anne thanked her for bringing it, but said:

"You needn't have bothered about it to-night. But where did you find it? I didn't know I had one with me."

"It was just in front of my bookcase," answered Jean.

"Oh, yes," broke in Anne as quick as a flash, "I must have dropped it when I was using the dictionary."

"Probably," said Jean, but she was a little surprised, for Anne's manner seemed very peculiar, and it suddenly dawned upon her that the dictionary was nowhere near the bookcase, but upon her desk. She said nothing, however, and quickly returned to her work and in a very few moments forgot all about the incident.

A week or two later Jean was sitting before the fireplace in the living room reading the "Century" when Polly Thompson came in from an afternoon recitation.

"Oh, how comfy you look here, Jean!" she exclaimed as she flung her hat and coat into the nearest chair. "I guess I'll read, too. The December number of the 'Circle' is just out and I'm dying to get a look at it. They

say it's by far the best number this year. Isn't the cover attractive? Becky Crosswaite did it. I hear she's going to give up college at the end of this semester and go to the Art School in town. She certainly ought to; she's a peach at this kind of stunt. But, there, I mustn't talk if you want to read."

"Oh, that's all right, Polly; I just want to finish a continued story I'm reading in this magazine, and then I'll be perfectly willing to have you read aloud to me from the 'Circle.' I feel just like being read to to-day. You look it over, and find something interesting, and I'll be ready to listen by that time."

"All right," said Polly, and soon the two girls were deep in their reading, and even Polly forgot to talk. But it did not last long, for just as Jean laid down her magazine Polly burst out, "Why, Jean Cabot, what do you think? Anne Cockran's got something in the 'Circle.' It's only a short little thing, but who ever would have believed Anne could get anything in? I thought her life was one long struggle with English themes. Isn't she repeating Junior Lit.?"

“ Yes, she is, but she’s been working pretty hard this year, and perhaps she’s doing some good work. Read it and let’s see what it is. I’m very glad, for it ought to do her a lot of good, and I have imagined lately that she was getting hopelessly discouraged about her work. She came back the day after Thanksgiving to do some make-up work, and that’s something unheard of for Anne. And then she told me only yesterday that she intended to give up tennis and basket-ball this year, because she found they took up too much time. But on with the reading! I’m all excitement about it.”

Then Polly began: “ It’s called, ‘ A Sunset from the Willows.’ Why, that doesn’t sound a bit like Anne! I never imagined she stopped to look at a sunset in her whole life. If it had been, ‘ How I Won My Numerals,’ or ‘ The Victories of My Class,’ or something like that. I shouldn’t have been surprised, but then, one never can tell what Anne will do next; she’s as changeable as the wind. Here goes for reading of the same.”

Jean had started a little at the title, but said

nothing, since any number of people might have been impressed by sunsets from the willows and chosen to write about them. But as Polly read on, sentence after sentence in her clear, fresh voice, it came over Jean with overwhelming certainty that she was listening to something she had written herself, a long while ago perhaps, but she remembered parts of it as clearly as though she had written it only yesterday. What did it mean? Polly had said Anne Cockran's name was signed to it. How could Anne have got possession of any of her themes? And if she had, how would she have dared to use them and sign her own name to them?

By this time Polly had finished and was asking Jean how she liked it, and Jean found herself in some unaccountable manner praising it and Anne's good fortune in having it printed. Then she asked Polly to read something else in order that she might have time to think it out more carefully. Polly read on and on, but Jean could not have told afterward one word that she read, for she was revolving in her mind the fact that just before she left the

hill to go to Anna Robertson's, Anne had asked her about her themes in the bookcase. And then she remembered the night that she had unexpectedly come upon Anne as she was leaving her room with an English notebook in her hand and a very queer expression on her face; and how that same night she had found Anne's handkerchief in front of her bookcase, and upon returning it, Anne had said she had probably dropped it there when she was using the dictionary. Jean knew the dictionary was nowhere near the bookcase, and she remembered now that she had realized that at the time, but had given it little thought. And added to all this was the fact that Anne had always disliked English, and had had a hard time with it, especially this, her senior year. She had flunked Lit. II the year before, and was trying to make it up this year along with Lit. I, and had about all she could do to keep up the written work in both courses. As English was a required subject, it was necessary that she should pass in these courses to graduate with her class and obtain her much-desired sheepskin.

Jean did not know what to do: if it were true that Anne had taken this theme, probably she had taken others, and was passing them in and receiving credit for work which was not hers. Something must be done at once, for such dishonesty would not be tolerated if it were known. But how was she to go about it? First, she must be sure that this was her theme; she was practically positive now that it was, but she would look over the pile in her bookcase, and see if this particular one were missing. Miss Whiting, for whom she had written the majority of the themes, was in Europe, and Miss Stevenson, who was taking her place this year, would never have suspected that Anne might be using themes that she had never written. It had been easy enough, Jean could see that now, but she was stunned by the thought of Anne's dishonesty, and she knew that upon her fell the unpleasant duty of investigation, for it must not go another week.

Polly finished reading, and tried to persuade Jean to take a walk with her before dinner, but Jean begged off, and asked if she might

borrow the 'Circle' until Polly returned. Then she went up to her room and, locking the door, sat down and read "A Sunset from the Willows" several times. Yes, she was sure of it now; it was hers and no question about it. She remembered when she had written it, and how, when Miss Whiting passed it back to her, she had written in blue pencil at the bottom, "Good. I like this." What a great satisfaction it had been to her at the time, for she was just beginning to enjoy her theme work. Leaving the magazine on her couch, she hurried over to the bookcase and took out the great pile of themes, the accumulation of four years, and searched feverishly through the ones she had written sophomore year, but she could not find the one she was looking for. To be sure she then looked through the entire pile, in case it had been misplaced, but it was nowhere to be seen. Then she found that several others, which she remembered because of favorable criticisms written upon them, were also missing, and she was forced to admit to herself that some half-dozen had been taken, and although she was

not ready at that moment to say by whom, suspicion pointed strongly in one direction.

As she sat thinking it over, the warning bell rang for dinner, and although it did not seem as though she could eat, she decided it was best to go down, for if she did not, the others would wonder at her absence and demand an explanation. So, putting the themes back in the bookcase, she quickly brushed her hair and got into a light dress, and reached the dining table even before some of the others. Anne was late, and came down in her sailor-suit, explaining that she had been up in the Lab. all the afternoon and was too tired to change her dress. Immediately there came from nearly every girl in the dining-room congratulations on Anne's literary ability as shown by the article in the "Circle." Anne turned a little pale, and asked what it was all about.

"Why, haven't you seen it?" asked Darthia Danielson. "The 'Circle's' just out to-day and you're in it. One of your themes about a sunset from the willows is printed, and we're so proud of your newly discovered literary talent that we don't know what to do.

Come, girls, let's all stand up and give Anne three hearty cheers."

And thereupon they all arose and cheered lustily for Anne, who sat alone staring at one and then another in a dazed sort of way.

"Why," she asked, "what do you mean? Something of mine in the '*Circle*'? Why, I didn't know anything about it. Do let me see it. Who's got a copy?"

Several girls offered to get theirs, but Polly Thompson arose and said, "Mine's in the living-room in front of the fireplace; let me get it."

But in a minute she added, "Oh, no, I gave it to Jean. Is it in your room, Jean? I'll run up and get it."

"Yes, I left it on my couch, Polly; you'll find it right in plain sight." And in a moment Polly was back with the magazine, and placed it triumphantly in front of Anne.

"There," she exclaimed, "look at yourself in print. How does it seem to be famous, anyway?"

But Anne glanced at the paper before her for a moment and said nothing; then after a

while she asked, "Who's faculty editor this year?"

"Miss Stevenson," answered several girls together.

"Well, that accounts for it, I guess; I have two courses with her this year, and she must have handed this over to the other editors without saying a word to me. I always thought you knew when something of yours was to be published."

"No, I guess not," said Polly, "unless you're clever enough to be asked to contribute. The faculty have a way of handing over work which they think is worth publishing."

"Oh," said Anne faintly, "I've never had much experience in lit. work, so I didn't know just what they did do."

"You're not very enthusiastic over it, seems to me," remarked Lois Underwood. "If it were I, you couldn't touch me with a ten-foot pole. I've been just crazy to have something of mine appear, but they've scorned everything I ever attempted except that little sonnet I wrote sophomore year. Keep it up, Anne, perhaps you'll make your fortune at it."

There's lots more money in writing than basket-ball."

But Anne didn't enthuse much, and hardly spoke during the meal except to answer some question addressed to her, and left the table among the first. Jean had noticed that she ate but little, and seemed so ill at ease that she pitied the girl with all her heart, and was trying to decide what was best to be done. One thing she had determined upon: that for two days she would say nothing to Anne about the matter, but if at the end of that time Anne had said or done nothing, she should take the matter into her own hands. After dinner she did not go up to her room, for there was a meeting of Student Government in College Hall at half past seven, and she had promised to stop at Wellington for Fliss Woodbury. How glad she was that Anne was not on Student Government, and that she did not hold a class office, for she realized that these were positions of honor, and Anne was no longer eligible for such places.

When she reached home from the meeting, there was no sign of Anne, and her room was

dark. The next day she went to recitations with a heavy heart, and sat beside Anne in French class; but Anne hardly looked at her, and seemed unusually absorbed in the translation. After lunch there was a Glee Club rehearsal, for she was accompanist this year; then came basket-ball practice in the Gym, and finally she took a long walk by herself until dinner time. In the evening she went with Barbara Lane to a house play at Merton. The first day of waiting was over, and not a word from Anne. All the next day it was the same: recitations took up the morning; the afternoon was spent in town with her music lessons; she had dinner with Cousin Anna; and at night met Fräulein Weimar and ten of the girls with whom she regularly attended the symphony concerts.

It was very late when she reached Gamma Chi House, and as she was alone, she crept up the stairs as softly as possible in order not to awaken any one. She saw a faint light coming from Anne's room, but she did not intend to stop to-night; to-morrow would be time enough for that, and she had not quite made

up her mind as to what she should say. She opened and closed her own door very softly, and felt confident that no one had heard her. She began to undress slowly, but she was not at all sleepy,—the music had been wonderful, and the soloist had set her to wondering if it ever would be possible for her, after years of study perhaps, to draw such melody from any instrument, and make glad the hearts of her listeners. It was worth trying for, even though it meant hard work and the sacrifice of personal pleasures. The world looked big and happy to-night, and why should she let trivial little things like English themes trouble her?

Just as she sat down at her dressing-table to brush out her hair for the night, her eye caught sight of a piece of folded paper underneath her brushes. Opening it, she found it was a note from Anne which read:

“DEAR JEAN: Please come to my room before you go to bed to-night. Never mind how late it is, I’ll be up. I have something very important to talk about with you.

“ANNE.”

Jean read the note through twice, and then finished brushing her hair, for she wanted to be in perfect control of herself before she began talking. Then slipping on a long silk kimona, she put out her light and stole noiselessly to Anne's room. She entered without knocking, and found Anne sitting at the table with six themes spread out before her. She had been crying — Jean was sure of that — but now she was perfectly calm, and her white face in the semi-darkness startled Jean.

“Well, Anne, I've come. You sent for me. I'm sorry it's so late, but, you see, to-night was symphony, and it's always midnight by the time we get to our rooms. Oh, the concert was wonderful! I wish you cared for music as much as I do; I'd love to talk it over with you. But you said there was something important you wanted to talk over with me. I'm ready.”

Anne did not say anything for a moment, but then pointing to the latest copy of the “Circle” and the six themes spread out before her, she said in a low voice, “There really isn't much to say, Jean. There they

are, you know what I've done. You knew two days ago when the 'Circle' came out that I never wrote that theme about the sunset. You knew it was yours, and that I'd stolen it."

Jean winced a little as Anne emphasized the word "stolen," but Anne continued, "Yes, stolen, that's the only word. I'm a thief and there's nothing else for me to do but confess it. It's a little thing to say I'm sorry, but I'm going to do it first, and then tell you the rest of the story. Of course I was as surprised as you to see the theme printed in the 'Circle,' for I knew nothing about it until the girls told me Tuesday night at dinner. If I had known before, something might have been done, and this would never have happened. You know English has always been hard for me, and I cut so much last year and gave so much time to athletics that I flunked the course, and had to take it over this year along with a math. course, as you know. Well, all the fall I tried pretty hard to make good, but there were so many other things to do that I was getting behind again. Then I got two faculty warnings, and things looked desperate.

“When you were sick and went over to Mrs. Robertson’s, you told me about your themes, and so after you had gone, I remembered what you said to us about helping ourselves to anything in your room, and I went in one night and took a theme. It was the very one that was printed, but Miss Stevenson said nothing to me about it, except that it was good. I knew this was her first year here, and that she’d never recognize any of your old themes, so I felt perfectly safe.

“Two other times while you were gone I took themes and passed them in, and then when I came back for extra work at Thanksgiving, I got desperate again and took three. You remember that Monday night when you found me in your room, and later brought me my handkerchief which I had dropped? I told you I had been using your dictionary, but of course that was a lie; I had the sixth theme there in my notebook, and had read several others which I intended to take at the first opportunity. I heard you coming up the hall, and was afraid you’d catch me then. I intended to put back the themes as soon as I

used them, but I forgot it until it was too late, and so here they are.

“I’ve suffered, Jean, more than you know anything about, and I’m proud, and I hate to tell you this. I had just about made up my mind to leave college without ever seeing you again, but I couldn’t bring myself to do that. So after thinking it all over, I have finally made up my mind what to do. I’m going to Miss Stevenson and tell her just what I’ve told you, and I’m willing to make an open confession in the ‘Circle’ to the whole college. I see I cannot continue with my two English courses and math. and all the other things, so I might as well drop them, and leave the senior class, and go back with the juniors where I really belong. I wasted last year, and I started to waste this one; but I see my mistake, and I’m willing to take the consequences. I want to ask your forgiveness before I do anything else.”

“Oh, Anne!” cried Jean. “How could you do it? I’m so sorry, and our senior year, too. But of course I forgive you, and I’m so glad you told me about it. You’ve been so

different all the year, and I've puzzled so hard to discover the reason. But now I see; you were worrying over your work so much that you forgot everything else,— your friendships, your society and your college, and we've all suffered together. But, Anne, I can't have you tell this to the whole college, and bring disgrace upon old Gamma Chi, which we love so much. Why need anything be said? I am willing you should tell Miss Stevenson, if you insist upon it, only on the condition that she keep our secret; but no one else need know about the themes. It would be a shame for you to drop back with the juniors, and I see no need of it, if you will work harder than you've ever worked before. I'll help you every minute that I can on English and you can tutor in math. I have it, Anne! You've wanted me to room with you all the year, and I've been so selfish I wouldn't, but now let's change rooms with Polly, who really is crazy for a single, and you and I can take her big room, and live and work together for the rest of the year. We couldn't let a Gamma Chi girl drop back, just because she wouldn't work



"I'VE SUFFERED, JEAN, MORE THAN YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT."

Page 95.

hard enough. Tell me if it isn't worth while, Anne?"

"Oh, Jean, you're too good; I don't deserve it. I've been hateful to you all the year, and always jealous of Elizabeth from freshman year. Thank you for offering to help me. I'll accept that, but I couldn't possibly think of turning you out of your room to live with a thief like me. You don't know how I appreciate your generous offer, but I just can't do it."

"Yes, you can, Anne; we'll say we were lonesome living alone, and no one need know anything more about our affairs. We'll work together every spare minute until mid-year's, and see what we can do in the way of English work. So please say you will live with me, and I'll tell Polly about it in the morning, and we'll begin moving right after breakfast."

"Oh, I can't, Jean; it's asking too much of you! I don't deserve it, but I'll try my level best all the same by myself, and perhaps I'll come out all right."

"No, I insist upon becoming your roommate, Anne, and I shall go ahead with my

plans, and expect you to follow suit. You look as though you needed some sleep. I think you'd better get right into bed, and stop worrying. I'll take these troublesome themes back with me, and nothing more need ever be said."

"Jean, you're doing this for Gamma Chi, I know, and from now on I shall be as loyal a member as you, and work for it and Ashton every day for the rest of the year. We'll be room-mates under those conditions. I shall see Miss Stevenson the first thing to-morrow, and confess the whole thing to her, and ask her what she thinks it is best for me to do. I feel as though I owed you and her a public apology in the 'Circle.'"

"Not that, of all things, Anne; there is no need of it. I am sure Miss Stevenson will feel as I do in the matter. She will know what it has cost you to make the confession to her, and, I am sure, will think it is better to avoid the publicity any such apology would make. I leave all that to her good judgment, but I hope she will accept your private apology and your determination to do good, honest work

in her classes from now until June. It's striking two, and we must get some sleep or neither of us will be good for anything to-morrow. Remember to-morrow is our moving day and mum's the word."

It was with no little surprise the next day that Gamma Chi House heard the astounding news that Jean and Anne were to room together for the rest of the year in Polly Thompson's big room, while Polly was to move her Lares and Penates into what had been Jean's single. There was still more surprise several days later when the college weekly printed the following notice:

"We beg leave to announce that through a misunderstanding on the part of those most closely connected with the same, the 'Circle' of December, made a slight mistake in its columns. A contribution entitled 'A Sunset from the Willows' bore the signature of Anne Cockran; it should have borne that of Jean Cabot. Notice of the same will also be printed in the next issue of the 'Circle.'

"THE EDITORS."

But no one thought of connecting the two events in any way; and after a few days of

surprise and speculation, the matter dropped entirely out of the minds of all, except perhaps of the three who had been most vitally concerned in it, and even with them it was a matter only to be occasionally thought of, never mentioned.

CHAPTER VI

CALLERS

IT did not take long for Jean and Anne to become accustomed to their new surroundings, and although each had her separate interests they found many hours to spend together in hard study. Anne seemed to have gained new heart, and was working with a determination which surprised Jean, even though her belief in her had been strong enough to justify the experiment. Hitherto Anne's work seemed to have lacked system, but now there were regular hours for study and recreation, and she persisted in allowing nothing to interfere with the programme which she had drawn up and conspicuously posted over her desk. To be sure, it was not always smooth sailing, and there were times when both girls felt sorely tempted to "do and say things," but Jean remembered that she was responsible for the change, and must make a

supreme effort to win out, no matter what it cost her personally.

One evening about the middle of December the two girls had gone to their room for some good hard work on a French test they were to have the following day. They had donned bathrobes and bed-slippers to be really comfortable, and locked their door against any possible intrusion of the other girls. For about an hour they read through some translation, and then pausing for a little rest began to talk of the Christmas holidays which were rapidly approaching. Anne and her mother were going to Philadelphia to visit Anne's married sister, and Jean to New York for a family party at her brother Tom's. Each girl had so much to anticipate and so much to tell the other that French might have been entirely forgotten, if Jean had not cut short her own remarks with, "Well, Anne, this will never do; we must finish this chapter before nine, for there are three more, besides the fifty rules in grammar, and I refuse to stay up all night, for all the French exams. in the world." So once more they opened their

books and were hard at it when there came a knock at the door.

"Let's not answer," whispered Anne. "It's probably some of the girls, and if they once get in, they'll never know enough to go out until warning bell, and we simply haven't time to waste on them to-night."

"All right," said Jean, and they kept so still no one could have heard a sound. But when the knock was repeated three times, and finally Katie's voice said softly, "Are ye there, Miss Cabot?" Jean went to the door and unlocking it confronted Katie.

"Pardon my's interrupting ye, but there's two gintlemin to see you and Miss Cockran. Them's their cards. I showed 'em into the living room, and they be waiting for yez."

Jean looked at the cards, and read aloud, "Mr. Robert Channing Bowker" and "Mr. Frederick Allen Bacon," and then turning to Katie she said quickly, "Yes, Katie, tell them we'll be down immediately."

As soon as the door closed on the ever-obliging Irish maid, Jean gasped to Anne: "Why, what ever put it into those fellows'

heads to come out here to-night and at this hour? I saw Bob only day before yesterday, and he said nothing about it? He's promised to bring Freddie Bacon out here for a long time, but I didn't believe he would ever get round to it. But how could they have come? There's no train at this time of night."

"Hasn't Mr. Bacon a machine?" asked Anne. "I think I remember you're saying something about it once. Probably they came in that. But I'm so sorry they chose to-night of all nights, for I ought to be studying. How would it do for you to go down alone, and take my apologies? I'll help you get ready, and then I can finish my French in a little while."

"No, that won't do at all," protested Jean, "for Bob is bringing Freddie out on purpose to introduce him to you, so that later on we can have some 'foursomes' at the ball games. I thought perhaps you'd like to invite him over for Glee Club. I've invited Bob, and if Freddie came, we four could do lots of stunts together. No, you've simply got to go down and, moreover, you must look your prettiest,

so as to make a favorable impression upon the fastidious Mr. Bacon."

"Very well, I suppose I'll have to if you say so. What shall I wear? Oh, I do hope they won't stay late, for I must finish that work to-night."

"Don't you worry about that. We'll finish it all right, and I'll give Bob the hint to leave at half-past nine. It will serve him right for not letting me know beforehand. There's no excuse with a telephone right here in the house. Please wear that pink gown; it's awfully becoming, and I'll wear my white. Hurry as fast as you can, and I'll help you when you get ready to have your dress fastened."

Although they hurried as fast as they could, it took them a long time to get ready. Things would not go right. Anne put on her only clean pair of silk stockings, and discovered a conspicuous hole in the heel. She had no silk to mend it with, and dashed down to Polly's room to get some. Polly was not there, so she hurried into Lois Underwood's room, and finally got her to furnish the much needed silk. Having mended the stockings, she made a

frantic search for her pumps, with the result that only one could be located. Finally with Jean's assistance the missing one was discovered under the farthest corner of Anne's couch, but, sad to relate, the bow was missing, and there was nothing to do but tear off the bow from the other pump to make them appear like mates. Then her hair, which usually accommodated itself very readily to her touch, refused so to do this night, and the thick masses were put up and taken down three times before Anne was anywhere near satisfied, and even then she protested that she never saw her hair look worse. When she was at last ready to slip on the dainty pink dress, Jean exclaimed: "Why, Anne, dear, you never can wear that! There's a great tear right in the back of the skirt."

"Oh, I remember," said Anne, "I tore it at the French play last week, and put it away without mending it. What luck! Well, I'll put on my brown velvet, that looks good enough, and I can fasten that myself and save time. Mother just sent me a wonderful new Irish crochet collar to wear with it, and I've

been saving it for some such occasion. What time is it? Have I been awfully long? I never saw anything like the way things go wrong when you want to hurry. You've been ready for ages. I wish you'd go down and I'll come just as soon as I can. Won't you, please?"

"No, I'd rather not, I think it will be better for us to go together. You're almost ready, let me help you with those hooks and eyes. Now we're ready, and you've hurried so you've got more color than you've had for weeks. I'm proud of you. Never mind if we have kept them waiting; it will do them good. They'd have got more conceited than ever, if we'd rushed down the minute their cards were handed to us. Speaking of cards, Bob's getting awfully formal all of a sudden. I don't know when he's sent up a card before. Perhaps it's because Mr. Frederick Allen Bacon is with him. I must say their cards are not particularly clean for people who are otherwise so fastidious. This one of Bob's is positively a disgrace for any gentleman."

Just as the clock struck nine the two girls

walked slowly down the stairs and on the landing which commanded a view of the living room Anne stopped Jean. "Wait one moment, Jean. I see part of one of them, let me get a better view. All I can see is a back, but I'm sure it's not Bob's; it's not broad enough. From this distance, though, he's very attractive, and has dark curly hair. Now I'm ready; you go first, and I'll follow demurely after."

As the girls entered the room, the two gentlemen arose and came toward them, the taller one bowing almost to the floor several times, and then extending his hand, he began:

"Ah, good evening, Miss Cabot and Miss Cockran; charmed to see you. Allow me to present my most honored friend, Mr. Frederick Allen Bacon."

Jean held the hand that was extended to her and exclaimed, "So glad to see you — but who are you? I've never seen you before, I'm sure of that, and there's a mistake somewhere, but perhaps you will explain."

The young gentlemen twirled their moustaches, coughed, and seemed just a bit em-

barrassed. But then Jean suddenly exclaimed:

“Oh, you wretches, you horrible old deceivers! It’s Polly Thompson and Rosalie Warner! We’ll have our revenge on you. Here we’ve wasted an hour dressing up for you, and we ought to be upstairs this very moment studying for our French exam. Why didn’t you take some other night to call?” And Jean could say no more, for she burst out laughing in spite of her momentary displeasure.

“Why, to-night was the very time. We’ve been planning to do it for some time, but were waiting for a favorable opportunity. Perhaps you will remember that at dinner to-night you two were saying very positively that nothing on earth could keep you from studying French. Rosalie and I thought we’d see how little a thing it would take to make you change your minds. After all, French doesn’t seem to count much when Mr. Robert Bowker and his Harvard friends come to call.”

“But, girls,” interrupted Jean with a blush, “where did you ever get such good-looking

evening clothes and such perfect makeups? You're the best-looking men I ever saw, I mean, of course, considering the fact that you're only girls. If I hadn't known that you were not Bob and Mr. Bacon, I should never have suspected. But where did you get their cards? Come, explain; I admit that you're very clever, and that you have the laugh on us, but I want to know more about it."

"Why, you see, these clothes belong to the Dramatic Club. Rosalie is on their committee for the next play, and she was telling me about what a fine lot of costumes they had on hand. All of a sudden we decided that we'd avail ourselves of the opportunity, and borrow some of them for some fun of our own. We spent a whole afternoon getting the things we wanted, but finally decided we had enough to completely disguise ourselves as 'perfect gents.' I know Katie didn't suspect, and since we've been sitting here several of the girls have gone up and downstairs and looked in at us admiringly."

"Yes, but how about the cards? Where did you get those?"

"Oh, I really stole those," said Polly with a smile, "one day when you sent me to your desk for something, I saw a pile of old cards right out in plain sight, and I helped myself to these two, knowing that some time I might want to use them. You don't mind now, do you, as long as I have returned them?"

"Why, no, I don't know that I do," said Jean good-naturedly. "You've surely had a lot of fun out of it, and haven't done any harm as far as I can see, except that you've kept us from studying for an hour. Now if you don't mind we'll ask to be excused, and go back to our evening's work."

"Oh," said Polly, "if we really make as good-looking men as you say we do, would you mind taking our pictures? I've got some flashlight powder upstairs, and it won't take a minute to get it."

"That will be fine," said Anne, "but would you mind if Jean took the pictures and I didn't stay, I really ought not to give the time."

"Oh, do," said Polly, "you look awfully fetching to-night in that new gown, and I think the pictures will be better if you are in one

and Jean in the other, to offset the beauty of us men, you understand."

"Well, if you'll hurry, I'll stay to oblige you."

So Polly went up to her room for the camera and the flashlight powders, and came back with a rush to begin operations. They had some difficulty in choosing the best place for the pictures to be taken, and in arranging the camera, but finally everything was satisfactory, and Jean took the first picture with Anne standing between the two "men." Then Anne made her preparations to take the second picture, put out the electric light, and touched a match to the powder. There was the expected explosion and the picture was taken, but something else happened. After the lights were turned on, the girls smelled something burning, and discovered that some muslin curtains just back of where Anne had been standing were ablaze, and the rug on the floor was smoking in several places.

"Why, Anne!" screamed Jean, "you're afire, too! Look at your skirt; pull it off

quickly! Polly, take up the rug and throw it out on the piazza and Rosalie and I'll take the curtains."

The fire had not made much headway, and the two girls easily pulled down the curtains and buried them in a heavy rug near at hand. Polly ran to the kitchen, and brought the excited Katie, and they threw pails of water on the Turkish rug on the piazza. Anne got out of her dress, and submitted it to the same treatment. The smoke, and the noise had summoned nearly every girl and the matron to the room, and the whole story had to be gone over several times. There was no great damage done except to one pair of curtains, the rug, Anne's new velvet dress, and Polly's borrowed masculine attire, which was pretty much soaked with water and dirt, but it had caused great excitement and worry on the part of everybody in the house, and they were thankful that there was still a roof above their heads and no great loss to any one.

It took some time to restore order and quiet, but between ten and eleven the four principals

in the dramatics went up to second floor. It was a rather sober little Polly who bade good-night to the others, as she said:

“Don’t worry, girls, I’ll pay all the bills, if it takes my allowance for the rest of the year. I’m thankful to get out of it this easy; the whole house might have burned down, but it’s been rather expensive calling, hasn’t it? Don’t sit up too late studying that French. You’ll get through just as easily if you don’t. I’m thankful I haven’t an exam. to-morrow. I’d flunk it sure. I’m so excited I’m afraid I can’t sleep a wink, and maybe later if I don’t feel better, I’ll come down and stay with you people.”

“All right,” said Jean, “come along, but don’t try any more disguises. Come just as you are, and without your camera. Don’t worry; things might have been lots worse, and you have the satisfaction of knowing you played a good joke on us, even though it was a little costly. Good-night.”

“Oh, Polly,” called out Anne as Polly went down the hall, “do be sure to save me one of

the pictures when you have them printed. I want one for my memorabilia."

"Don't mention it, Anne, you can have them all. I don't want to ever see one of them. I'm ready to give my camera away. Want it?"

"Surely, if you don't change your mind in the morning. Good-night," and then the house settled down to the customary quiet of the night.

CHAPTER VII

THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

THE girls were hardly back from the Christmas holidays and settled down to serious work again when there came the startling news that three girls in Eliot Hall, the new freshman dormitory, were down with diphtheria and had been ordered to the hospital. The next day four girls in Wellington showed symptoms of the same disease, and the situation became so serious that Miss Emerson, fearing an epidemic, decided to close the college until all danger was over. Girls hurried away as fast as trains could take them; those who lived at some distance, for the most part, accepted invitations from their more fortunate friends, and in a few hours the campus was as deserted as on a summer's day.

Although any number of girls had urged Jean to go home with them, she refused them all, and telegraphed Elizabeth that she would

reach Wilton Junction on the evening train, and hoped that some one would be there to meet her. She had not seen any of the Fairfax family since early September, and was glad of this opportunity to visit them, although she pitied the girls who were left behind so very sick, and those who had been exposed and consequently placed in quarantine.

Occasionally on the long journey of the afternoon she wondered if they had received her telegram, for if not, of course there would be no one to meet her and it was a long drive to Newburgh. Perhaps it would be impossible to hire any one to drive her until the next morning; and the prospect of hunting for a place to stay over night in a strange little town did not appeal very strongly to her. Perhaps she had been a little hasty in her decision, but she was longing for a sight of Elizabeth, and it was worth running the risk. But her fears were all in vain, for as she alighted from the train at the Junction, and tugged her heavy suit-case round to the entrance of the station, with great joy she saw Dr. Fairfax just driving up in the old, familiar sleigh. Jean had

expected Elizabeth, too, but said nothing about it until after she had been tucked in beside the doctor, and they had started on their way. Then her curiosity could not be held in another moment, and she said:

“Oh, Dr. Fairfax, where is Elizabeth? I can hardly wait to see her. When did you get my telegram, and were you awfully surprised? I couldn’t stop to tell you the details, but Miss Emerson feared an epidemic of diphtheria and closed college. I had to go somewhere, and risked your wanting to see me up here. Can you stand me for a week or two?”

“So many questions at once, Jean! But I think you want to know first about Beth. She was disappointed not to drive down with me to meet you, but I couldn’t allow it. Fact is, she’s been having a hard cold all the week, but wouldn’t give in to it, and when she came home this afternoon, she was all tired out, and had a little temperature, so I put my foot down good and hard and made her go to bed and forbade her to get up until I gave her permission. But she’s so excited at the prospect of seeing you that I almost expect to see her

at the window when we drive into the yard. She's been working so hard all winter she's thoroughly tired out, and just in the right condition for a cold to get a strong hold on her. But it'll do her good to see you, for although she doesn't say much, I know she gets pretty lonesome sometimes on this great wind-blown hill of ours without any of you girls. It's a fact, there aren't many young people here, so I don't care how long college is closed. We all of us need you just as long as you can stay. It's like a breath of springtime to see you again."

There was not a silent moment during the eight-mile drive, but the doctor did most of the talking. Jean was content to sit back, wrapped in the great fur robes, and listen and think. Although she had been over the road many times now, in all seasons of the year, it always had a new charm for her, and she loved it, especially on sharp, wintry nights like this, when the sleigh slid rapidly over the well trodden snow, and the moon and the stars lighted them on their way.

They were not long in reaching home, but

Elizabeth was not at the window to greet them. Once in the house Jean bounded up the narrow stairs, to find Elizabeth lying flushed and restless, but so glad to see her. Dr. Fairfax would not allow them to talk long, so they left the most important things until morning. As the next day was Saturday, Elizabeth could stay at home, but she would not have been able to go to school had it not been a holiday, for although she was no worse, every one felt sure that the wisest thing for her to do was to remain in bed. Jean spent the entire day telling her all the news of college and reading to her in between times from some new books she had slipped into her suit-case at the last moment. It was the same on Sunday, but about noon as Elizabeth seemed to lose interest in what Jean was reading, Jean said:

“Beth, dear, something is worrying you; you aren’t listening to a thing I’m reading. What is it? Can I do anything to help you?”

Elizabeth said nothing at first, but after a moment exclaimed with a little choking sob:

“Oh, it’s the school. I can’t go back tomorrow morning. I don’t feel well enough.

I have tried so hard to get well, but it's no use. And I know Father won't let me get out of this bed until I'm better. What shall I do? There's nobody in town to ask to take my place, and Mr. Jennison can't do all my work and his own, too. It's hard enough when I'm there. If there was only some one who could go in for a day or two, for I know I'll be all right again by that time."

"Oh, Elizabeth, why can't I teach? You can tell me what to do, and I'll carry out your directions to the letter. I admit I don't know much, but if you'll help me I think I can keep things running until you're able to go back. It'll be a great experience for me."

"But, Jean, I wouldn't want you to do it. It's terribly hard; some of the boys are rough and hard to manage, and don't care about trying to learn anything; and Mr. Jennison is fault-finding and never seems satisfied; and the room and board are dreadfully poor at Mrs. Wakeman's. It would all be so different from anything you have been used to that you couldn't stand it."

"How you talk, Elizabeth! Of course I

can stand anything you have to stand, and I'm going to try it, anyway. If the big boys run me out of school, I'll come back and let Mr. Jennison run things himself. What shall I have to teach? You can give me some motherly advice right now, and then let me look over to-morrow's lessons."

"I suppose I'll have to give in, for if you've made up your mind to go, nothing on earth can stop you, I know. Well, I have English and French and Latin and bookkeeping and astronomy."

"Heavens, is that all? Why, I never read a line about bookkeeping or astronomy in my whole life. What are they like?"

"Don't worry about them, dear. There are only two or three pupils in the classes. The bookkeeping class know what to do without any more instructions just now, and they can work ahead by themselves. And you can read up the lessons in astronomy. It's very simple."

"Yes, but suppose they ask me questions I don't know anything about?"

"They won't; they're not bright enough for

that, but if by any chance they do, just tell them you don't know, or else make up an answer. My books are all over on the table; if you'll bring them here I'll show you where the lessons are. You'll have to make an early start in the morning. Father generally leaves by half past six, for it takes more than an hour to drive over, and school begins at quarter past eight. He can take you to Mrs. Wakeman's first, and show you your luxurious quarters. Oh, I forgot to tell you that Mr. Jennison lives there, too, so perhaps you'll meet him at the house, for he never starts for school until the last minute. Anyway, I'll have Father go up with you to the Academy and introduce you to 'His Majesty' and see that you get started all right. I think it's the worst kind of luck for you to come up here for a good visit, and then have to go away and teach school; it's almost as bad as staying at college and having diphtheria."

"Nonsense, Elizabeth, I sha'n't mind it at all; in fact I'm quite keen about it. I think it's the best kind of a lark. Imagine the satisfaction of being able to boast in the years to

come of my first pedagogical successes in Whitestone Academy."

And so it happened that on Monday morning very early Dr. Fairfax and Jean bundled into the big sleigh and started for Whitestone, some seven miles the other side of Newburgh. During the ride school was not mentioned, and not until Dr. Fairfax had left her at the old Academy building in charge of the principal, did Jean's courage waver. But it must be confessed that as she stepped into the assistant's tiny room with its huge wood stove, its cracked, age-begrimed blackboards, and its hand-carved seats and settees, a queer feeling came over her, and something hard rose up in her throat. Several early arrivals peeped in at the door with curiosity settled fixedly upon their red, soap-shiny faces. If Jean had yielded to her first impulse she would have made a rush for her hat and coat, and dashed after Dr. Fairfax, who was already walking slowly down the creaky old stairs.

But after a moment that feeling was gone, and in a dazed sort of way she was listening to what the man before her was saying. It

took but a glance to see that he was displeased to have anything so unexpected break in upon the established routine of his school, and he did not try to conceal it. But there was something in Jean's attitude toward him and her work that showed him he had an entirely different person to deal with from his regular assistant, whose sensitiveness and conscientiousness had made her an easy prey for his unthinking remarks, which were often very unkind as well.

The opening exercises were in the main room and here Jean had her first experience in being stared at from head to foot by some fifty or so young people, anywhere from twelve to twenty years of age. Whenever she raised her eyes, she could see the exchange of glances and whispered comments and a general commotion everywhere, until she was startled to hear a deep voice commanding order; but the moment the principal's eyes were lowered to the book from which he was reading, the disorder began again. After a few general remarks the exercises were over, recitations began, and Jean found herself in the small reci-

tation room again with the senior class in French. There were five girls and two boys seated on the long settee in front of the desk and fifteen or so others studying in the back of the room. As French was her favorite subject, Jean felt at home at once, and meeting the class more than half way, soon had their confidence and respect.

When the period was about half over a boy in the rear of the room asked for a ruler, and Jean replied that she did not know where they were. She was immediately informed by the big boy in the French class directly in front of her, that Miss Fairfax kept them in the lower left-hand drawer of the desk. Without stopping the girl who was reciting, and keeping her eyes on the French book to follow the translation, Jean reached down to the drawer, and opening it, put in her hand to take out the ruler. Instead of a hard ruler, her hand touched something alive and wiggly, and she gave a little scream, and looked down to discover something black just disappearing from sight:

“What is it?” she cried. “Oh, Miss

Wilder, come here, and tell me what is in this drawer."

As Miss Wilder, the girl who was reciting, came up to the desk, a big, fat, black rat jumped out upon the floor, and stood calmly gazing up at the new teacher. Every boy in the room began to laugh, the girls looked frightened, and there came numerous offers to kill the offender. But in a moment Jean regained her composure, and realized that undoubtedly the rat had been placed in the drawer by the big boy in the French class to frighten her and cause a disturbance. She said nothing about the incident, and continued with the recitation, only gazing occasionally at the rat as it wandered at will round the desk and the stove. It seemed perfectly peaceable, and did not leave the front of the room during the recitation. When the class was dismissed, Jean said nothing, and although inwardly she was greatly agitated, she appeared perfectly calm, and met the next class as though nothing had happened, merely explaining that they had a visitor which would remain until recess time.

When that time arrived, and she was alone

in the room, she was surprised to see John Matthews, whom she had suspected of the deed, come into the room with one or two others, and ask if she would like him to kill the rat. She replied that she would like it removed as quietly as possible, and they could do what they pleased with it when it was out of the room. Thereupon followed a vigorous chase and when the exhausted animal was finally driven out into the hall Jean called out: "Thank you, Master Matthews. Would you mind coming in a little later? I'd like to ask you a few questions about the French work."

The day passed without any other striking incident, but it was neither easy nor a success from Jean's point of view. The girls would persist in giggling and whispering; the boys seemed to have little inclination to study or recite; there were innumerable requests for paper or pencils or books or rules, and the hours dragged on until it seemed as though half past three would never come. Mr. Jennison found several excuses for coming into the room. Once he slammed down a window which she had opened for a little fresh air, say-

ing that it was altogether too cold for comfort. Another time he walked in front of her desk and picked up several tiny bits of paper that had been accidentally dropped there, as though he wished to show her that the floors must be kept immaculate. Not one encouraging word did he offer her, and he spoke sharply to one or two of the pupils who seemed to Jean to be wholly undeserving of reproof.

But once out in the open air Jean shook off the depressing atmosphere of the first day, and hurried away in the direction of her boarding house. She heard some footsteps behind her and a voice called out her name. Turning she saw John Matthews and one of the other boys. "Oh, Miss Cabot," John said, "we're going sliding, wouldn't you like to go with us?"

"Indeed I would, if I hadn't this pile of books."

"Oh, you can leave those at the postoffice; it will save lots of time, and we can get them on our way back."

So Jean spent the next two hours on the long hill enjoying slide after slide, although

she declared that each one must be her last, as she ought to be at home looking over her school work for the next day. But it was after six when she hurried into Mrs. Wakeman's and found that admirable woman anxiously watching for her from a little window in the sitting-room. Supper was generally served at five and Mr. Jennison had already eaten, but Mrs. Wakeman said she had waited for her, because she did love company, "especially them that talked, and Mr. Jennison was such a poor hand at talking that she 'bout as soon eat alone." The array of food spread on the table was cold and did not look particularly appetizing and Mrs. Wakeman poured one tale of woe after another into her new boarder's willing ear. But when she began on the details of her third husband's last sickness and death, Jean arose and excused herself to go to her room, which Mrs. Wakeman assured her was warm and cozy.

Alas, the room might have been warm once, but never cozy. When Jean entered it, there was no sign of fire in the diminutive air-tight stove and the atmosphere had little suggestion

of any recent heat. To be sure, there was wood enough in a basket beside the stove, but Jean had never made a fire like that in her life, and she finally decided that the only thing left was to go to bed at once and keep warm, even though it was not yet eight o'clock. But first she must write to Elizabeth, for she had promised to send a letter every day and give an account of her life in Whitestone. It was too cold to write much and she shivered as she wrote:

"Dear Beth:

"The first day is over and it has been one grand success. No difficulties whatsoever. I can't say I have fallen in love with His Majesty or your boarding mistress, but the school and the children and the town are splendid. More to-morrow, but I can't write another word to-night I'm so tired. Oh yes, just one more thing, I have developed a great interest in a certain big boy named John Matthews; tell me about him.

"JEAN."

Then she blew out the lamp, and crept into the great feather bed, her head teeming with new ideas of what she was going to do the next day.

Tuesday morning she was a little late in reaching the Academy, for she went around to the postoffice to mail her letter to Elizabeth, and when she came into her room and shut the door, she was surprised to hear a half dozen erasers drop to the floor and one hit her on the shoulder. With them came a shower of crumbs and she saw at a glance that some one had come into the room early enough to put the erasers and some cookies on the top of the door to startle her when she entered. She picked them up, and swept up the crumbs, and went on with her preparations for the morning's work as though nothing had happened, and she had not heard the suspicious snickers in the adjoining room.

Recitations went better; every one seemed to be trying; she scarcely spoke to a pupil for disorder; and she truly began to enjoy her work, for she was conquering, little by little, and that in itself gave her secret satisfaction. The only disturbing element was the occasional entrances of the principal, and she felt a bit of annoyance every time the door from the main room opened and he came tiptoeing into sight.

On one of the last visits of the morning he announced that they would have a music lesson in the afternoon, and he expected she would play the piano, as Miss Fairfax always did. He spoke in so commanding a tone that Jean felt tempted to say she could not play, but instead she answered she would be very glad to do so, for she was determined, if it were a possible thing, to win his good-will.

As it was stormy that day she had brought her lunch and was eating it in the recitation room when several of the younger girls came in and asked if they might join her. At first they were a bit shy, but as it gradually wore off Jean found herself listening to a brief history of the little school, and as soon as she could control the conversation, she began telling them some college stories, and they soon forgot their own petty grievances. When the bell rang for the beginning of the afternoon session, all the scholars assembled in the main room and Jean took her seat at the old-fashioned square piano to await the arrival of Miss Lucretia Gray, a worthy spinster who had devoted most of her life to the gentle art of

music. Jean had heard all about her from various sources, so she was not surprised at her peculiar appearance and manners. She was a tall, thin, angular woman, a little overdressed in her endeavors to keep up with the prevailing styles, and extremely nervous, as shown by the constant shaking of her head and the fluttering of her little white hands. She greeted the children effusively and then was introduced to Jean. Jean thought she had never seen any one quite so funny in all her life, and had all she could do to keep from laughing in her face, but she felt she must maintain her dignity, or lose the respect of the pupils, so she bit her lips to keep back the laugh that threatened destruction.

The first song was called, "Beautiful Night," and Jean struck the opening chords and waited for the singing to commence. Such absence of melody! She had never heard anything like it. There was evidently an attempt to keep the four parts, but it seemed as though every pupil was singing in a different key and on a different part, apparently unconscious of the fact. A small boy in the

front row, whose voice was a monotone, persisted in drowning out those near him who were trying to carry the bass, and all the while Miss Gray was bending back and forth in time to the music and smiling approvingly. Jean did not dare look up from the music. She was shaking so she wondered how much longer she could stand it, and what she should do if it got any worse. Then followed, "The Lord Is My Shepherd," and this was more than Jean could stand. At the end of the first verse she could keep back her laughter no longer, and putting her handkerchief to her face, pretended to cough violently, and hastened from the room. But out in the hall she had no peace, for Miss Gray, thinking she might need help, hastened after her to offer assistance. Jean felt she must get control of herself, and once and for all made a last effort, and returned to the room and to the piano to finish the lesson. Time and time again she was tempted to laugh, but she remembered what was at stake and controlled herself. She found Mr. Jennison watching her closely with a knowing look, and at the end of the lesson she was not surprised

to have him ask her very sarcastically if her cold was better.

Then one of the children, who knew Jean could play, asked Mr. Jennison if Miss Cabot might play to them until recess time. Strange to say, he gave his consent, and Jean managed to get real melody out of the rattly old piano. The children sat so quiet and still that one would hardly have believed they were the same noisy roomful of the morning, and Jean played one piece after another, stopping occasionally to explain the story of what she was playing. When the bell rang for recess, the old room echoed with round after round of applause as Jean rose from the instrument and went into the other room.

After that second day it was smooth sailing. Jean had no further difficulties, the children felt they could respect her, for she was trying her very best, in a frank, straightforward manner, to do all that was expected of her, and a little more. She was not afraid to work, and seemed to inspire the same feeling in the others. Even Mr. Jennison began to change a little in his attitude toward her, and tried to

be pleasant. By nature he was not the pleasant kind, so it was somewhat of an effort for him, and he hated to admit that this inexperienced college girl was making more of a success than he; but he was beginning to see the reason for it, although he never would have admitted it to any one but himself.

Jean remained a little while after school Wednesday afternoon to correct some written work she had given that day, and just as she was gathering up her books to go home, John Matthews came into the room.

"Excuse me, Miss Cabot, but I came in to invite you up to our house to-morrow night to a candy pull. It's my birthday, and Ma said I could have any kind of a party I wanted. I'm going to invite the whole school, and I want you too."

Then John's face began to show unmistakable signs of a blush, and he shifted a little uneasily from one foot to the other as he added, "Before you answer one way or the other, I want to tell you — er — that I feel ashamed of myself for what I did when you first come. I — er — er — I put that rat in your desk, and

the erasers and cookies on the top of the door, and I — er — whispered more than any of the others. But you're a funny kind of a teacher; you didn't seem to mind it at all; leastways you didn't talk about it, and scold us like all the other teachers we ever had. I always like to have some fun with the teachers, especially the new ones, and it was so easy to plague Miss Fairfax, and see the color come into her face and her eyes snap as she tried to find out who did things. I know it wasn't right, but I did it time and time again, and put the other boys up to it, too. But it wasn't that way with you. Why you seemed to make us feel ashamed without saying anything to us. All you had to do was look at us. Well, I made up my mind good and soon that I might as well stop my funny work, for you weren't the kind of teacher to try it on. I'm sorry — and I promise you I won't do it again no matter who we have here, for I want to do some work and graduate and go to college like you do. But I wish you were coming back. Why can't you teach us always, Miss Cabot?"

Jean ignored the last question, and said

pleasantly, "I shall be very glad to go to your party, John, but how can I get to your house? Isn't it a long distance?"

"Yes, but I'll see that you get there all right. Don't worry about that, if you'll only say you'll come I'll 'tend to the rest. I want my family to know you."

"All right then, John, I'll surely go, and thank you for telling me about the rat. I thought you knew all about it and if I waited long enough you would tell me. It's getting dark. We mustn't stay here any longer. Would you mind helping me carry some of these books to the library?"

John was only too glad to be of any assistance to the new teacher, and they walked together in the gathering darkness to the little room up over the postoffice, where were kept the few books the town possessed.

Somehow news spreads like wild fire in a little country town, and most of the children went home and told their families how beautifully Miss Cabot played on the piano. It reached the ears of Mrs. Wakeman, who, although she had no children to tell her the news,

had a telephone, and was always conversant with the latest bit of gossip. So that evening she asked Jean if she would play to her a little on the organ which was kept in the sacred front parlor, and hadn't been touched since her daughter Nelly left home some twenty years before. She invited Mr. Jennison to the concert, and, strange to say, he remained downstairs, something unprecedented in the annals of his boarding with the Widow Wakeman,—another topic of interest for the local telephones on the following day.

Jean couldn't get much melody out of the wheezy old instrument, but played from a hymn-book, as Mrs. Wakeman picked out one favorite after another, and kept audible time with her creaking rocker. The room began to grow chilly as the small amount of wood in the fireplace became exhausted, and when Mrs. Wakeman was called to the telephone, Jean stopped playing and arose to go to her room. Mr. Jennison, rising at the same time, asked if he might speak with her for a moment. In a very stumbling, hesitant way he asked if he might drive her over to the party at John

Matthews' the next evening. John had invited him, and said Miss Cabot was going, too. He could hire a horse and sleigh at the stable, and they could go together instead of in the barge with the children. Jean wanted to say no, but the change which had come over the young man since Monday morning gave her reason to hope that she could win him over, and make Elizabeth's course easier for the rest of the year. So she said she would be glad to accept his invitation.

Thursday night was dark, and it snowed a little, but the sleighing was very good, and Mr. Jennison and Jean soon covered the five miles to the Matthews' farmhouse. There was an old-fashioned candy pull and then games, and it was nearly twelve o'clock before the party broke up and started for home. At first Jean had little to say, and listened patiently to Mr. Jennison's continual remarks upon the school and his successful management of the same. She was just on the point of asking him to show a little more tolerance to Elizabeth, when the horse suddenly shied at a tree which had fallen part way across the road, gave a plunge,

overturned the sleigh, threw the occupants into the snow, and started on a dead run down the lonely road. By the time Mr. Jennison had picked himself up, and helped Jean to arise, the frightened steed was far away and entirely lost from view.

As soon as Jean recovered her breath she exclaimed: "Oh, Mr. Jennison, please hurry after that horse! What shall we do? Every one else is ahead of us, and we'll never get home to-night."

Mr. Jennison started to run down the road, but he soon realized it would be of no use to try to overtake the runaway horse, for it was headed straight for home, and probably wouldn't stop until it arrived there. Panting after his exertions, he came up to where Jean was standing in the middle of the road, and said:

"I'm afraid we'll have to walk, Miss Cabot; it's no use trying to catch the horse. I'm very sorry, but there doesn't seem to be anything else to do. But I understand you're very fond of walking, so you won't mind."

"Yes, I am," snapped Jean, "but not at

midnight and in snow up to one's neck. But if there's nothing else to do, we may as well start."

For the first two miles neither of them said a word, and then Jean burst out laughing.

"Well, Mr. Jennison, we needn't be so grouchy about it; of course, you couldn't help the accident, and it doesn't make matters any better to act this way. I think it's time the ice was broken, anyway. You've tried hard all the week not to be friends and it hasn't made life any easier for me, but you couldn't prevent my doing good work in spite of it. Now I want to ask you to help Miss Fairfax when she comes back. She's afraid of you, I think, but I'm not, and I never worry, and I guess that's why I've got along so nicely with everybody but you. And I hope you're not going to stand out against me any longer, or against Elizabeth—I mean Miss Fairfax. The school will never amount to anything unless you work together, and I know what I'd do if I were going to stay here. There, I've said too much, perhaps, but I do want it to be easier when Miss Fairfax comes back. I know

John Matthews or Rod Lawton will never give her any more trouble, and I'm almost positive that —"

"Yes, Miss Cabot, say it. You can be positive that I, too, will try to do better. I haven't made it as pleasant as I might have for Miss Fairfax, but I haven't got much patience, and when I thought everything was going wrong, I had to have some one to blame things on, and perhaps it did fall on her too often. And I apologize for the way I treated you, and if you'll give me the chance, I'll show you tomorrow what I can do, and what I mean to do for the rest of the year."

With the ice thus broken, they talked pleasantly together for the next two miles, and finally reached home at an hour that would have shocked any of the worthy inhabitants of Whitestone, had they been awake to see. After leaving Jean at Mrs. Wakeman's, Mr. Jennison hastened to the hotel where he had hired the equipage of the evening, and found to his relief, that the horse had returned some time before, and although the hotel-keeper had been considerably alarmed, he had not known

anything better to do than wait for the appearance of the driver. After an explanation had been given, he said the sleigh would have to remain out on the Bellington Road all night, even if it did get covered up with the snow, and if there were any damages he could settle for them later on. With a light heart the young man left the hotel and hastened to his boarding house to get a few hours of sleep before the inevitable alarm clock should awaken him to the duties of the day.

Friday, the last day of school, was a happy day for every one; even the children noticed a change in the principal and seemed to be influenced by it. In the afternoon as Jean sat at her desk looking out of the window, she caught sight of Dr. Fairfax and Elizabeth driving up into the yard. How glad she was to see them! It seemed as though she could not keep herself from running down to greet them. And how glad she was too that they could know her week had been a success, even though she was very tired after so many new experiences. When they came up into the building, Mr. Jennison welcomed them cor-

dially, and seemed really glad to see Elizabeth. As the children caught sight of her, their faces lighted up with joy, even though they would have confessed that they were sorry to have Miss Cabot leave. One of the boys came forward and asked Mr. Jennison if Miss Cabot might play to them before she left, and he willingly gave his consent. Jean went to the piano and played for a full half hour. Then she asked Elizabeth to sing, "Beautiful Night," and her clear soprano voice rang out as the children had never heard it, and they encored her again and again.

After school was dismissed and Mr. Jennison had thanked Jean for what she had done and the three were in the sleigh for their ride back to Newburgh, Elizabeth said:

"Jean Cabot, what have you done to that school? It's just as different from what it was last Friday as black is from white. You've bewitched everybody, I can see that easily enough. You'd better take up school teaching."

"Never. It's too much work, but I'll come

up and relieve you any time you say. Have you any mail for me at home?"

"Oh, loads of it," said Elizabeth, laughing, "and most of it seems to be in one handwriting. To-day there was a telegram which I brought along. Do you suppose that means we'll have company over week-end?"

As Jean tore open the telegram and read it, she exclaimed:

"Oh, you wise one! You know all about it. You wrote him a letter yourself. Yes, he'll be here to-morrow noon. O I'm so glad, for Dick will be here, too, and we'll have a regular reunion. Oh, let's hurry and get home, so I can have my letters." And the old sleigh with the three happy people journeyed up and down hill until it reached the Fairfax homestead.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REST OF THE VACATION, AND THE JUNIOR SURPRISE

AT the supper table that evening Jean regaled the family with an animated account of her week's experiences, and was just in the midst of the midnight walk from the Matthews' party when there came a low, familiar whistle, and some one stepped onto the side porch. The four looked at one another, and said in one voice, "It's Dick, but how did he get here at this time of night?"

In another moment Dick was in the room, offering explanations for his unexpected arrival, for he had written that he would come Saturday, on the late afternoon train, and the two girls had planned to drive down with Bob to meet him. But he had changed his plans when he found he was to have a cut in math. Saturday morning, and he took the same train a day earlier so that he could have as much

time as possible at home. He supposed he was a little late for supper, but he couldn't get there any earlier. As it was, he had walked more than half the distance, for the only person he found coming Newburgh way was old Farmer Cushing, and he had turned off at the Crossroads. It had been easy enough walking at first, but when it began to rain, it got slippery, and he couldn't make much progress. He declared he was hungry enough to eat everything there was in the house, and he promised that if they'd only let him fill up once, he'd talk with them until midnight on any subject under the sun. So Mrs. Fairfax placed one good thing after another before the hungry boy until, when he had finished, he insisted that he had eaten more in that one meal than he usually ate in a whole week at his boarding-house.

After the dishes were done, the family gathered in the sitting-room before the blazing fireplace to eat butternuts and popcorn and listen to the tales of the hero. For Dick was a mighty sophomore now, having those experiences he believed no one else could have had,

although three of the little group had passed through that same glorious age, and were perfectly familiar with all those things which he found of paramount interest. "Classes come and classes go, but sophs go on forever." Dick had gone to college the year following his serious illness—a year spent in outdoor life on his father's farm,—with the determination to make the most of his opportunities. He was succeeding, but he found time for other things along with his studying, and the intercourse with young men of his own age from all parts of the country was broadening his hitherto narrow horizon, and making a splendid fellow of him. Perhaps he no longer dreamed of becoming a poet, but he still clung to the hope of doing things worth while.

Even when the butternuts and popcorn were all eaten, and only the dying embers were left from the blazing fire, and Dr. Fairfax and his wife had stifled several successive yawns, there were still untold victories to be rehearsed and numberless questions to be asked and answered, and it was with reluctance that Dick admitted that they could wait over until the

next day. He wasn't sleepy; why, no, he seldom went to bed before twelve, and here it was only eleven; but when he remembered his father's regular early hour of rising and the chores he meant to help him do in the morning, he rose with the others, and taking the old brass candlestick from the kitchen mantel, climbed to his little cold room in the attic, which from childhood he had loved in the summer and hated in the winter.

During the night it cleared and turned colder, and when the sun shone next day it revealed a world of dazzling beauty. The girls spent the morning in the kitchen helping Mrs. Fairfax with the cooking. There was plenty of it to be done, for wintry air and out-of-door life does not lessen the appetites of healthy young people, and similar experiences in the past had taught her to always lay in a plenteous store of good things when there was company expected. Jean did not do any of the actual cooking, but she pared apples, cracked nuts, beat eggs, whipped cream, stoned raisins, and frosted cakes, while Elizabeth and her mother made the cakes and pies and pud-

dings one after the other; and when at noon the three stood before the pantry shelves and surveyed the results of the morning's work, Jean declared it looked like a regular Thanksgiving feast.

After Dick had helped his father finish the chores, he got out the big double-seated sleigh, and began cleaning it, for it had not been used for so long that it had nearly lost its identity in the network of cobwebs that covered it. Then the big fur robes were shaken and placed on the backs of the seats, the harness brightened up a bit, and all was ready but the horse. Dick was hoping there would be no "hurry-up" call for his father, because under those conditions he would be obliged to take their one horse in the one-seated sleigh, and then Dick would be forced to visit one of the neighboring cousins or uncles or aunts, and borrow another horse. But fortunately there was no call, and at twelve o'clock everything was in readiness for the drive to Wilton Junction. The three wore their sweaters and coats and toboggan caps, for it was bitter cold, and when they had taken their seats and drawn the great

black robes up over them, their best friends would have had difficulty in recognizing them.

They reached the station about one, and found they had fifteen minutes before the train was due. Rather than wait in the cold they decided they would drive into the town, and stop a minute at Cousin Margaret's to see the new baby. They got so interested in thawing out and watching the baby that the fifteen minutes flew by unnoticed, and by the time they had started back to the station, they heard the whistle of the Boston express, and knew that Bob would arrive with no one to meet him. As this was his first visit in that part of the country, his impressions might not be altogether favorable. Dick hurried the horse as fast as he could, but when they came in sight of the station they were not long in discovering Bob walking restlessly up and down the platform. They shouted a chorus of greetings, and he waved his bag at them as though it were a signal of distress, and hastened toward them. When they had driven up beside him, they gave him an enthusiastic welcome, with regrets that they had not been in

time for the train, and as his eye caught Jean's, one might have detected a deeper color in her cheek than the sharp wind would have accounted for.

The ride home was not so cold, for they had the wind at their backs, and it was slower going, for there were long hills to climb. As they neared the top of one of them they saw some boys coasting, and Jean exclaimed:

"Wouldn't this be a perfect night to go coasting? The moon is nearly full, and the rain has made a hard crust over the snow. Why can't we go on the hill back of your house? Have you some sleds?"

"We used to have a big double runner that father had made for us when we first went to the Academy, but it hasn't been used for years. If Father hasn't given it away, it's out in the woodshed. I'll take a look at it when we get home, and see if it's fit to use," and Dick waxed as enthusiastic over the prospect as Jean.

When they reached the house, the doctor came out to take care of the horse; and the young people made a bee-line for the dining-

room, where a steaming hot chowder awaited them. They ate so much and talked so long that by the time they left the table it was four o'clock, and Dick suggested that they go out with him to take a look at the double-runner. At the mention of the word "double-runner" the doctor gave a hearty laugh, and said:

"Why, bless my soul, who'd ever have thought you'd want that old double-runner again! I gave it to the little Joneses only last week, but perhaps you can borrow it of them for to-night, if you've set your hearts on coasting. It's not as warm as it might be, and you'll have to wrap up with everything you've got; I don't want any frozen ears and fingers and toes to take care of to-morrow."

"Don't worry, Father," said Dick. "I guess we won't do much sliding, if the Jones tribe have the 'dub.' I'm not going down there after it; it's altogether too far."

"Of course not, Dick," returned Jean, "there's no need of it, anyway. We can slide the way we do at college, or rather the way we used to do, for since two of the girls got hurt just before Christmas, Prexy made a rule

against it. But we used to take our chafing-dish trays and dustpans, or anything else we could lay our hands on, and slide on the crust. So let's take some old milkpans or dishpans and go out now on the hill back of the house. There's absolutely no danger there, and I'm bound I'm going sliding somewhere, somehow. Won't you come with us, Doctor?"

"No, thank you, Jean; you couldn't find a milkpan big enough to hold me, I'm afraid, and then, too, I'm not at all anxious to leave my remains on the stone wall."

"Well, I'm not either; but we needn't go in that direction; we can go toward the meadow and there's nothing there to stop us unless we go through into the brook. Don't you think that's frozen solid enough to hold even such a heavy weight as you?"

"Yes, indeed, Jean; that side of the hill will be safe enough for anybody."

"All right then, let's choose our sleds, for we want to do our sliding while the moon is up."

They did present an amusing picture, when, wrapped like Eskimos, with pans in hand, they

started to ascend the hill. The dignified Harvard instructor, for lack of a toboggan cap, wore a gray worsted muffler tied over an old sealskin cap of the doctor's, his own raccoon coat and some cast off high top-boots of Dick's, and he carried the largest milkpan the family possessed. Dick had a broom; Jean, Elizabeth's round chafing-dish tray, and Elizabeth, a large, flat dustpan. They had agreed to exchange sleds after each slide until they found the ones best adapted to their needs. Jean headed the procession, and being a past-mistress in the novel art, she was persuaded to take the first slide. Nothing daunted, she seated herself on the tray and asked Bob to give her a vigorous push. Off she started, but it was so slippery Bob found himself unable to let go of her shoulders and they went flying down the hill together. Before they reached the bottom, however, he lost his balance, and fell with such force that it broke the crust and brought his slide to an abrupt halt, with no other damage done than to send his glasses some twenty feet away, and scatter them in a thousand little pieces, while Jean wildly con-

tinued the slide like a ship without a rudder. They were soon at the top again ready for another slide, and started off the others, who sometimes reached the bottom in safety, and sometimes slid off their scanty sleds and finished the slide without them. Occasionally they joined hands, and tried to go down abreast, but sooner or later they were bound to part company and go skiing off in various directions.

It was not so cold after the sun set, for the wind seemed to go down with it, and the novelty of the sliding so interested the young people that they completely forgot about supper, until Doctor Fairfax came to the foot of the hill, and shouted:

“Last call for supper! Hot griddle-cakes and maple syrup, now served in the dining-room!”

Then they made a dash for him, and rushed pell-mell into the house. How they did consume those steaming hot griddle-cakes! It kept Mrs. Fairfax so busy frying them that finally the doctor had to go into the kitchen and relieve her.



JEAN SEATED HERSELF ON THE TRAY AND ASKED BOB TO GIVE HER
A VIGOROUS PUSH.—*Page 157.*

They spent the evening before the fireplace, just talking; several cousins dropped in, and there was plenty to say. Sunday there was church in the morning and a sleigh-ride to Whitestone in the afternoon, as Bob wanted to see where Jean had taught and lived for a whole week. He refused to believe she had been there until he saw the town and school. Then Monday morning Dick and Bob left for their respective colleges and Elizabeth for Whitestone, and Jean was left alone. But she did not mind because it was a good opportunity for real rest; she could go to bed and get up just when she pleased, and during the day work on a thesis which would be due shortly after her return to Ashton.

So she worked and rested until Friday, when she received a letter saying that all danger was over and college would reopen the following Monday. She decided to leave Saturday morning in order to get back to the society house by the time the other girls began to arrive. Elizabeth drove her down to the station early in the morning, and with real reluctance saw her disappear from view as the

train left the little station. Then with a great loneliness in her heart she got into the old sleigh again, and headed the faithful horse homeward.

By Monday night nearly every girl had returned to Ashton, and college activities were resumed as though nothing had happened to disturb the peace of mind of the whole student body. Soon diphtheria was forgotten in the startling announcement that for the first time in the history of the college the juniors were to have a Junior Day the last week in February, with flag raising and an athletic meet in the morning, Glee Club concert in the afternoon, and as the crowning event, the presentation of Tennyson's "Princess," in the gymnasium that evening. In order that there might be no ill feeling caused by the assigning of the parts in the play, all those who wished to do so were invited to take part in the preliminaries, where a committee from the faculty were to choose those best fitted for the several parts. Copies of "The Princess" were immediately rushed into service, and in dormitory and class room, library and gymnasium anx-

ious juniors might have been seen conning the thirty lines, which were to decide their fate. The Gamma Chi girls were as excited as everybody else, and Polly Thompson made their life miserable by continually calling out to every one she met, "Oh, wait a minute, please; just hear me say this once more; there's one line I can't seem to get, and you know the 'prelims' come Friday." Polly had always shone in the house plays, and was secretly longing for one of the star parts on Junior Day, but she realized that the competition was keen, and that any number of the girls were as anxious as she to be chosen.

The preliminaries were held in the afternoon, and in the evening all the excited juniors were invited to assemble in College Hall to hear the decisions. After Polly and the other juniors had left the house, the rest of the girls assembled in Jean's room to await their return, and to hear about the latest plan for mutual benefit that had evolved from Anne Cockran's fertile brain. As each girl entered the room she stumbled, or barely escaped doing so, over a large box that reposed calmly in the center of

the floor. Anne refused to answer any questions, until every girl had found a comfortable seat. Then she began:

“ Well, girls, the mystery of the box is about to be revealed. It’s nothing to cause so much excitement, for it’s only a crate of grapefruit. But you needn’t all look so pleased at that information, for it isn’t a present. I bought it this afternoon, or rather I had it sent up from Conant’s. I couldn’t resist the bargain, for Mr. Conant told me if I would take the crate, I could get the fruit at the rate of eight cents apiece and ordinarily we pay fifteen or twenty. Of course I can never eat all of them myself, so I’ve decided to offer them for sale. I’ll have the crate put in the corner on top of my steamer trunk and you can come in and help yourselves any time you want to, provided, and here comes the rub, provided you are willing to drop eight cents into the little bank I shall put above the crate, after signing your name and the date to the paper you will find pinned to the wall. Then there’ll be no excuse for you’re saying you can never get enough grapefruit at breakfast and in between times. Now

what do you say to my proposition, girls? I'm not trying to make money, you see, in spite of the fact that I need it badly just at present, but it seems to me too good an opportunity to pass by."

Cries of approval sounded on all sides, and Anne found herself compelled to open the crate at once in order that everybody might test the fruit. During the process of removing the cover most of the girls hurried to their rooms for more plates and spoons and a reinforcement of sugar, and by the time they were back again, dozens of the rich yellow fruit were exposed to view ready to be tested one after another until they found what seemed the ripest and juiciest. Just as most of them were beginning on their second half, they heard the front door opened and the juniors come trooping up the stairs and down the hall in the direction of the feast.

"Something must have gone wrong, I think, by the way they're sputtering," said Anne. "Hope the feed will cheer them up a bit," and she hastened to the door with a grapefruit in each hand. "Come in quick, Junies, we're

crazy to hear who got the Prince and the Princess and all the other parts; while you're talking, help yourself to grapefruit, and I'll tell you later what the tax will be."

But Rosalie Warner burst out indignantly, "Don't say 'parts' to us, we're so thoroughly disgusted we refuse to talk about the matter. We didn't any of us get anything except Polly, and all she got was little insignificant Melissa, when everybody's said all along that she ought to have the Prince or one of the other star parts. She says she's going to tell the committee to-morrow morning that she won't take the part, and I for one don't blame her."

"Nor I!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!" came from each of the other juniors. Polly seated herself in front of the open box, and began searching for a ripe fruit. When she had found one that satisfied her, she exclaimed, "Oh, I'm so hungry I could eat half a dozen of these. I've been so nervous for the last week I positively lost my appetite, but now I'll make up for lost time. No more worry for me, thank goodness; now I can sit back and watch other people work for a change.

Not another stroke of work for the class as long as I live."

"Why, Polly Thompson," retorted Jean, "you don't mean that you're going to desert your class like that just because you didn't get the part you wanted in a play? You ought to be tickled to death to get any part at all, and do your level best no matter what it is, for the sake of the class, if for no other reason. Only think how few of the girls can take part, anyway. It's a disgrace to Gamma Chi for you to refuse this part, and I, for one, shall be heartily ashamed of you if you do anything as childish as what Rosalie suggests. Come, show the stuff you're made of, and be a real true sport instead of a make-believe. Here's a grapefruit I've fixed especially for you; eat it, and I'm sure you'll feel much more amiable."

But Polly would not be comforted at first, and declared she did not want the part and would not take it. Jean said nothing more just then; she believed that when Polly had thought the matter over by herself she would do the right thing, for her sense of right and

wrong was very keen and generally guided her aright. The more the others talked, the less Polly had to say, and several times Jean saw her gazing fixedly at the wall in front of her as though lost in thought and entirely unconscious of her surroundings. Suddenly she arose and exclaimed:

“Well, girls, they say it’s a woman’s privilege to change her mind, so I’ve gone and changed mine. Of course I’m going to take the part that’s been assigned to me, and I beg of you all to say nothing about my previous feelings on the matter. Perhaps I’ll do so well they’ll wish they’d chosen me for the Prince instead of Joe Hallowell. I’ve eaten so much I know I’ll never be able to get to sleep, but I guess I’ll make a start anyway. I think your scheme’s a dandy, Anne, and at the present rate of consumption, perhaps you’d better order a dozen boxes of grapefruit for the rest of the season. How much do I owe you now?”

“About sixteen cents, Polly.”

“Well, you’ll have to trust me till next week. I have only ten cents left from this

month's allowance and I want to keep that for luck." Then Polly left the room, and after the other girls had helped clear up the much disordered room, they followed suit, and Anne and Jean were left alone. The moment the door closed behind the last girl Jean exclaimed eagerly:

"Oh, Anne, did I say too much to Polly. I wanted her to do the right thing, but I'm afraid I hurt her feelings, and she's so sensitive I wouldn't do that for the world."

"No, it was only what she needed; she'll stand anything from you, and I'm positive you're the only one that could have made her take that part. She'll be all right in the morning, but I wouldn't go down there to talk to her to-night. Do you want to look over *Deutsch* for a few moments; there are several pages more to read."

They spent only a few moments on their German, and were soon in bed. Next morning Polly was in her most amiable mood, and seemed to have forgotten everything but that she was going to have a part in the play. Rehearsals began that very day, and continued

thick and fast for the rest of the month, until the girls declared they were worn into shreds. The last rehearsal was on the afternoon before Junior Day, and only then did Miss Hamilton, the coach, admit that she was anywhere near satisfied. Everything was in readiness, and now there was nothing to do but wait for the hour of the performance.

Polly went to her room early for a good night's sleep, but about half-past eight Anne wanted a book she had left the night before in Polly's room, and went quietly down the hall to see whether Polly was asleep or not. Imagine her astonishment, upon nearing the door, to hear, instead of the expected peaceful breathing of the sleeping girl, a loud clear voice reciting line after line of poetry. She listened as long as she dared; then ran back to her room, and dragging Jean over to the couch, whispered:

“What do you think Polly Thompson has done? I believe she's learned every line of the part of the Prince in the play. I heard her reciting it to herself just now when I went down to get my German ‘dict.’ I was

reading over the play only last night and I recognized some of the speeches instantly. I suppose she was so disappointed she didn't get the part that she's been learning it at rehearsals to satisfy herself. Poor child, I guess we didn't any of us realize how badly she did feel!"

"Polly has a remarkable memory," said Jean, "and I shouldn't be surprised if she knew the whole play by heart. Well, who knows? Perhaps it will come in handy one of these days. I shouldn't say anything to her about it if I were you. I hope she'll do well, for she's set her heart on it. Don't you think if we want to win any of the events in the meet to-morrow, we'd better begin training by going to bed early to-night. 'Better late than never,' you know. I advise you to let those chocolates alone, too, for candy's against the rules."

"Oh, we haven't much chance against the sophs. They're perfect crackerjacks, and are boasting that they'll take every event. I wonder if I can borrow a gym. suit anywhere; my bloomers are absolutely impossible, and I

haven't time to make any more. Are there any extra ones round the house?"

"I think you can take Bess Johnson's. She can't possibly enter. Her ankle isn't strong enough yet for her to use it except for necessary walking. Why don't you ask her?"

"Just the thing, Jean; you certainly always do come to the rescue with your bright ideas. I'll run over to her room now and ask her about it."

"Don't stay too long and forget all about our training," laughed Jean. "You'll probably find me fast in the arms of Morpheus by the time you return, and I warn you not to make any noise to wake me up."

"Don't you worry, I'll be back in a minute," and Anne jumped up from the couch, and was out of the room and down the hall before Jean realized it.

CHAPTER IX

JUNIOR DAY

NEXT morning it was snowing, and although it was the last day of February the driving wind and the whirling snow pointed to a regular blizzard. So the flag-raising, which was to have taken place at half-past nine, had to be indefinitely postponed; but the storm could not interfere with the meet which was called for ten o'clock in the gymnasium. Long before the appointed hour the galleries began to be filled with the enthusiastic friends of the juniors, who dared to brave the elements in anticipation of this innovation on the part of the junior class.

The whole college had been invited to participate in the meet, and promptly at ten o'clock the four classes, led by the juniors, came onto the floor and marched slowly round the "gym." twice before they took the places assigned to them. The juniors wore white dresses and

white sweaters, with huge red crêpe paper muffs hung round their necks by wide red ribbons; the seniors wore white with blue poke bonnets and blue frilled overskirts; the sophomores had lavender dresses with caps and surplices of green, and the freshmen wore baby dresses of white, their hair braided and tied with green ribbons, and they carried green baby rattles.

In turn they sang their class songs, alternating with "Alma Mater," and after the three other classes had given lusty cheers for the juniors, they sat down to watch them in folk dances. Then all four classes competed in Swedish gymnastics, and the seniors won, with the sophomores second. Next came competition between the freshmen and the sophomores in folk dances, and the sophomores won. Then the juniors gave an æsthetic dance called "Spring," and in competition with this the seniors danced "The Echo" and a merry little French peasant dance, and won. To make up for this loss the juniors exerted all their energy, and won in the apparatus work and especially starred in rope-climbing.

The most anticipated event of the morning, the relay race, came next, and after the toss-up it was found that the juniors and the seniors were to run first and then the two lower classes and finally the winners of both these races. It happened that Joe Hallowell was to start for the juniors and Anne Cockran for the seniors, and at the signal they bounded away up the track. But at the first bend Joe turned her ankle, and fell heavily to the floor, striking her shoulder as she did so. Anne was just ahead of her, but turned in a flash, and bending over her, asked what she could do. The doctor and Miss Matthews and crowds of the girls were on the spot by this time, and as Joe tried to get up, she gave a little scream of pain, and pointing to her ankle and her right shoulder, said in a low voice:

“Something’s the matter here, and here. Please do something quick, Doctor, for I’ve got to be the Prince to-night, if I have to be carried onto the stage on a stretcher.”

The doctor pushed the crowd back and then after a hasty examination told Joe that she must be taken to the Infirmary at once, for she

had not only wrenched her ankle but also dislocated her shoulder.

"Oh, I can't go, Doctor," she wailed; "just think, I'm to be the Prince, and if I'm in the hospital, what will the girls do? It will spoil the whole play and it'll all be my fault."

"Now, don't worry, Miss Hallowell," said the doctor. "I'm sure they can fix things up all right, and people will understand and make allowances for what has happened. Let me help you up onto the couch the girls have brought here for you. Keep up your courage; you're doing splendidly."

A hush had fallen upon all of the girls and their friends; the idea of continuing the meet was immediately abandoned, and every one waited anxiously for the arrival of the automobile which was to convey the injured girl to the hospital. Here and there groups of girls whispered together, and one felt intuitively that the juniors were saying with one accord, "Hard luck for Joe, but what are we going to do for the Prince to-night. At this eleventh hour there's no one can take her place, but we can't give it up now." And then if

one had been watching Anne Cockran, they might have seen her steal quietly up to one of the most animated groups, and drawing Helen Varney, chairman of the Play Committee, aside, whisper to her a few moments. After this hurried consultation Helen returned to the group for a moment, and then she hastened from one group to another until she finally found Polly Thompson, and threw her arms around her.

"Oh, Polly," she whispered, "I've been looking for you everywhere. You've got to be the Prince to-night. I know you can do it. We'll have a special rehearsal all this afternoon. You won't mind giving up the 'Glee,' I know. Come into the dressing-room now, and try on Joe's costume; there may need to be some alteration, but Beth Sawyer can attend to that."

"Why," gasped Polly as the color left her face, "how did you know? But I can't take the part; who'd be Melissa? And besides I'm not good enough. Then I couldn't learn the part in just this afternoon."

"But you know it already, don't you, Polly?"

I'll risk it anyway. Just come into the dressing-room while I tell the girls and we make some arrangements with them."

"All right, Helen; but first please tell me who told you I knew the part."

"Never mind how I found out. I just know you can do it, and there's no need of wasting any more time over it. It's your chance to win glory for your class, so show your sporting blood, that's a dear."

As the two girls walked toward the dressing-room and the group of juniors collected there, the automobile arrived, and the injured girl was taken from the gymnasium and carried to the hospital. This was a signal for the meet to be over, and the girls and their guests began to disperse. The looks of disappointment and sorrow on the girls' faces began to disappear gradually, as one by one heard the good news that Polly Thompson was going to take the part of the Prince in the play, for by good luck she knew it almost as well as Joe Hallowell, and had been so interested at all the rehearsals that she had benefited as much from the coaching as Joe herself.

Just as Jean was leaving the building Polly went dashing by her, but stopped as Jean called out to her. Drawing her close she whispered: "Oh, I'm so glad, Polly, for you and for Gamma Chi. It's splendid and we're proud of you."

But Polly looked at her searchingly and said: "Oh, Jean, it was you that told. But how did you know? I've never told a soul."

"No, I didn't tell, Polly, this time, so you can't blame me. Really, I don't know anything about it, but I'm awfully proud of you, and can hardly wait for to-night to see you star. Is there anything I can do to help you get ready?"

"I don't think so, Jean; the girls are doing everything they can, and I'm trying to keep cool and collected, but it's hard work, and I'm getting more excited every minute. I mustn't stop any longer now, for Helen Varney is waiting for me in the dressing-room. I came out to see if I could find Rosalie. Have you seen her? I want her to do an errand over at Wellington."

"No, I haven't seen her since breakfast,

but if she's at the house I'll send her up here. I do believe it's stopped snowing. I hope so, for it will make it so much nicer for 'Glee' and the play. Good luck to you, Polly," and Jean caught up with Lois Underwood and Bess Johnson and the three walked slowly in the direction of Gamma Chi House.

By three o'clock the chapel was filled with the girls and their friends; and shortly afterward the Glee and Mandolin clubs came out onto the platform, and received round after round of applause before they took their seats. Every girl was dressed simply in a white linen dress with a bow of black velvet at her neck and a Killarney rose tucked through her belt. As they stood and waited for the applause to cease Belle Moylan, junior class president, walked slowly down the center aisle and stepping up to the edge of the platform presented a huge bunch of Killarney roses to Margaret Brock, leader of the Glee Club. Behind her came Miriam Farnsworth, class treasurer, with a bunch of violets and lilies of the valley for Julia Miles, leader of the Mandolin Club, and after this the concert began.

It seemed as though the girls never sang better, and song followed song until there came the hit of the afternoon, Carolyn Gay's solo, which was a topical song. No one escaped, the underclasses, the "Stewed G's," the faculty, conspicuous freshmen, dignified seniors, one and all found themselves exposed to the wit of the soloist, and every one took it in the good spirit with which it was given, and laughed when it was some one else's turn to be attacked. There was encore after encore, and a new verse each time, until at last poor Carolyn sank down in her chair completely exhausted, and the Mandolin Club went on with the programme. It was long after five before the concert was over, and only then did the enthusiasm lessen a little, because everybody felt they needed a short breathing spell before the *pièce de resistance* of the day, the presentation of "The Princess," and the informal dance that was to follow in the gymnasium.

Still it seemed but a few moments before the gayly decorated gymnasium was thronged to the doors and the sign, "Standing Room Only" had been displayed at all the entrances.

The girls were in their newest gowns, and wore an eager air of expectancy, for by this time every one in college knew that at the last minute Polly Thompson was to take the part of the Prince and Esther Coburn the part of Melissa. From the rising of the curtain to the end of the play there was not one dull moment: the scenery and costumes had been designed and made by the girls; the acting was perfect, and Polly Thompson was the center of attention every time she came on the stage. There was no question as to her ability to play the part of the hero, and she easily became the bright, particular star of the performance. Girls looked at each other in surprise as one scene followed another, and they asked each other how it happened that she had not been chosen for the part in the first place, and finished by saying that there was no question in their minds as to who would be president of Dramatics next year.

After each act there were curtain calls galore for all the stars, and most of the girls found their arms full of flowers from fond admirers.

As the curtain fell for the last time the excited juniors rose to their feet in a body and cried, "We want Polly Thompson; we want Polly Thompson," so persistently that after a while Polly, resplendent as the Prince, came out upon the stage rather hesitatingly, and bowed her thanks to the shouting girls. Suddenly a cry of "Speech! speech!" arose from a hundred throats, and Polly shrank back still farther against the curtain and tried to open her mouth to say something. But her courage seemed to desert her, and for a moment she could say nothing. Finally she managed to gasp:

"I thank you girls for everything you have done for me to-night — it's been splendid — and I guess that's all," and she ran off the stage and disappeared from sight.

It did not take long for the settees to be removed from the floor and the music to start and the girls to swing out upon the polished floor. When Polly came down among the dancers, she went straight over to Jean for the first dance which she had promised her, and

when they had finished the encore Polly said: "Jean, I want to thank you for giving me the part of the Prince to-night."

"Why, Polly, I didn't give it to you; the class did."

"Yes, you did, Jean — that is, you made me take the part of Melissa the night of 'prelims' down in your room when I had made up my mind I wouldn't take it. You see, if I hadn't kept that part and got so interested in the others that I learned the part of the Prince, I'd never have been able to help out poor Joe to-day. But what I want to know is how Helen Varney found out I could do it. No one will tell me anything about it, and I don't see any reason for keeping it such a secret. Don't you know anything about it, Jean?"

"Well, nothing positive, but I have my suspicions —"

"So have I, and will you tell me if mine are the same as yours? If it wasn't you that told, and you say it wasn't, I believe it was Anne, for she's had the queerest look in her eyes every time I've seen her to-day and she's seemed so happy over something that it's shone right out



POLLY SHRANK BACK STILL FARTHER AGAINST THE CURTAIN.
Page 181.

on her face. I've about come to the conclusion that it's this very thing. Am I right?"

"I can't tell you, Polly, but I'll admit that I've suspected Anne, too. Now if you want to be sure about it why don't you have the next dance with her, and ask her point-blank. She's right over in that corner, and looks as if she were waiting for a good partner. Thank you so much for this dance," and then Polly hurried away to ask Anne for the next. For a moment she talked earnestly with Anne, and then turning around, smiled over at Jean, and nodded her head as much as to say, "We were right; it was Anne."

CHAPTER X

THE SENIOR DANCE

ALTHOUGH Jean had stayed until the very last minute and danced every dance the night before, she was up bright and early next morning, for she had a music lesson in town with Professor Leighton in the morning, this time instead of her usual afternoon hour. Fortunately she had but one recitation and she felt she could cut that with perfect safety, so directly after breakfast she left the house to catch the early train. It was bitter cold, for it had been steadily growing colder since it had stopped snowing the day before, but Jean snuggled down into her furs and hurried along as fast as she could.

When she reached the station she found that the train was already in and she just managed to jump onto the platform as it started. The seats were nearly all filled with commuters hidden in their morning newspapers, but finally

she saw one just ahead of her with only one lady in it, and as she slid into it a pleasant voice called out, "Why, good morning, Miss Cabot! Are you cutting too?"

To her surprise Jean found the other occupant of the seat was Miss Emerson, who soon explained that she was obliged to make an early start for a lecture she was to give that afternoon in New York, and for the first time that year was missing chapel, but as she had prevailed upon Miss Thurston to take her place, she felt reconciled to leaving. In turn Jean explained that Professor Leighton had written her to come in for her lesson that day at half past nine if possible, as he was leaving for a stay of several days in Chicago, and did not wish her to lose a lesson.

"Oh, I am glad you are so interested in your music, Jean," said Miss Emerson. "I was talking with Professor Leighton only last evening at a dinner party in town, and he told me that he thought you had a brilliant future ahead of you, if you would devote plenty of time to it. Have you made any plans for next year?"

“No, only that I’m going back to California for a while. My father is very anxious to have me there again, for he says he hasn’t really seen me for four years. But I don’t believe I’ll be content to live out there always; I’ve become so fond of the East that I know I shall want to spend part of my time here. But I’m not thinking much about the future. I’ll let it take care of itself for a while, and perhaps I’ll be happier than as if I did a lot of worrying about it.

“Oh, Miss Emerson, before I forget it, I want to tell you that I had a letter from Mother this morning, and she says they start East the first of April, and go to New York to stay with my brother and aunt until Commencement, but she’s going to run over to college in May with the baby to make us a call. There’ll be so many of the upper class girls that will want to see them that I have decided to have a tea in the house; and would it be asking too much of you to be one of the pourers?”

“Why, I shall be delighted, Jean, if I am

in this part of the country. Of course I never know when I shall be called away, but I can think of no engagements in May that will prevent my helping you, provided you let me know early enough."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Emerson, I'll let you know just as soon as I hear definitely. Here we are at the North Station. I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed this ride in. I'm delighted we both had to cut chapel the same day. I hope you'll have a splendid time in New York; wish I were going, too. Good-bye," and the two parted at the waiting-room, more like classmates than college president and student, but perhaps this very thing was the secret of Miss Emerson's wonderful popularity with her girls.

It was still too cold to enjoy walking, so Jean took the elevated train and was soon at Professor Leighton's studio. "Ah, good morning, Miss Cabot," he said as she was removing her hat and coat, "I am delighted to see you, for I didn't know whether you would be able to come this morning or not. But I am glad

you are here, for I want to talk to you for a few moments after the lesson is over. Let us begin at once."

The hour passed very quickly, as Jean went from *étude* to sonata, stopping now and then for criticism, and before she realized it Professor Leighton said:

"There, Miss Cabot, that will do for to-day. Excellent, excellent. Now shall we talk for a little while? Please sit over here and be more comfortable." After Jean had gathered up her music, and taken the one comfortable chair the studio possessed the professor began again:

"Miss Cabot, a wonderful opportunity has come to me recently, and I want you to take advantage of it, too. I have been offered a scholarship in the Leipsic Conservatory for two years, with the privilege of taking one of my pupils with me for the same length of time. I have decided to offer this to you, because it has seemed to me that it will mean more to you than to any of my other pupils. You have reached a point where you need more instruction than I can give you, and there is

nothing better in the world than this conservatory. Of course it will mean hard work, probably the hardest you have ever had, and two years of it without cessation; but time goes quickly when one is happy in what one is doing. I shall start late in August, and go directly to Leipsic, and hope that you will accompany me. Of course you will want time to think this over, and you need not give me an answer until I return from Chicago, but if you do not care to go, I shall feel obliged to take one of my other pupils."

"Oh, Professor Leighton, why do you offer this to me? I surely don't deserve it, and I can't possibly accept it. I have other plans, and two years away from home is such a long, long time. Please don't think I'm ungrateful, but it doesn't seem as if I could."

"Now, Miss Cabot, please don't say anything more about it now; think it over and come in to see me two weeks from to-day, and we'll talk it over again. Will you excuse me now, for I have two important engagements before the noon train. I'm sorry to have to hurry you so, but you'll understand. Oh, I'd

almost forgotten. Could you use two tickets for a recital in Symphony Hall this afternoon? I had intended going myself, but I'll be glad if you can use them instead."

"Thank you," said Jean, "I'll be delighted to go and take my cousin who is almost as fond of music as I am. Do you suppose we'll freeze on the way? I hope it will moderate by noon; it's awful weather for the last day of February." As Jean took the tickets she bade good-bye to Professor Leighton, and started out of the room, but she turned back suddenly and exclaimed:

"I wonder what makes you have so much faith in me, Professor. You may make me go in spite of myself," and she tripped down the stairs so lightly that the professor smiled to himself, as though he was quite satisfied with his morning's work.

The severe cold made shopping out of the question, so Jean went directly to her cousin's and prevailed upon Anna to break another engagement and go with her to the concert. During lunch and on their way to the hall the two talked continually about one thing and an-

other, but, although Jean found herself several times on the point of telling Anna about Professor Leighton's wonderful offer of the morning, something held her back, for she felt this was a matter she had best settle for herself. Now that Elizabeth and Miss Hooper both were gone she had fallen into the way of confiding in and asking advice from Anna whenever she felt the need of it; but for some unaccountable reason she talked of everything else to-day, in spite of the fact that the one thing which had taken possession of her mind was the possibility of the two years' musical study in Leipsic.

The concert over, Jean refused Anna's invitation for dinner and the night, pleading lessons and the cold as an excuse, and leaving her cousin at a subway station about five o'clock, hurried for her own train. To her dismay she found on arriving at the station that the 5:17 express had just gone, and that there would not be another to Ashton for an hour. Rather than wait all that time she decided to take a train which left a few minutes later, and stopped at Somersworth, a small suburban

town three miles this side of Ashton. There she could take the electrics, which would carry her to the edge of the campus, and from there follow a path across the fields to Gamma Chi House.

All went well until she left the electrics and stepped out into the stinging cold, then instantly she regretted her hasty decision, for she realized it was going to be a long hard walk against the driving north wind in the semi-darkness which had settled over everything. But it was too late to turn back, and she plunged boldly forward with her chin down in her furs. After a little she found it harder and harder to make much progress, for again and again the path seemed to lose itself, and the pale lights ahead of her grew dimmer and dimmer. One of her hands began to feel numb and she wondered if it were much use to try to reach the house. Why not give it up for to-night, and sink down where she was, and wait for the morning. A feeling of drowsiness crept over her, and she was about to yield herself up to it when she caught sight of a lantern almost directly ahead of her. Rous-

ing herself with a supreme effort, she shouted as loud as she could, and with a thrill of joy heard a cheery response. In a moment by the light of the lantern she recognized the ruddy face of Mr. Chapin, the express agent, although he was wrapped up very heavily against the cold.

“Why, Miss Cabot, what on earth be you doing down here such a night as this is? It sure beats all records for cold this winter in spite of the fact that to-morrow’s the first day of March. Late spring this year all right, or I miss my guess. But you’re a long way from college, and going in the wrong direction, too. Aren’t you cold? Seems to me you’d better stop a little while to my house. It’s jest over here, and warm up a bit.”

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Chapin. I guess I have lost my way and I’m almost frozen. If I hadn’t met you just now I think I should never have reached college alive. It just seemed as though I couldn’t go one step farther, and I believe I was freezing inch by inch. But if I can get warm a minute at your house I’ll be all right again, and if you will start me in the

right direction I'll get back without any more trouble."

"Well, let me take your arm, Miss Cabot, and we'll soon be home, and after you've got warm and had a bit of supper, I'll take you up by the main road, for this path ain't the easiest way in the world, after all. Can you walk all right this way? Don't be afraid to lean on me. I'll carry you if you say so."

"Oh, no, I feel better already, Mr. Chapin, and I'm sure I shall be all right if I ever get warm again."

So the two walked back to Mr. Chapin's small, but comfortable little cottage, and were soon in the process of thawing out. In about half an hour Jean felt so much better that she insisted upon starting out again in spite of the cordial invitation she received to spend the night where she was. It did not take long for them to reach Gamma Chi House, and hurriedly Jean bade Mr. Chapin good-night and ran up the walk and on to the piazza and disappeared from sight.

But once in the house her strength seemed to fail her again. She was very tired, and

went straight to her room, where she found Anne at her desk busily writing letters.

“Oh, Jean,” said Anne, “I’m so glad you’ve come, I’ve got the greatest news to tell you. But, child alive, what is the matter with you? You look like a ghost. Sit down a minute, and let me help you out of your coat. What’s happened?”

“Nothing, Anne, except that I’m tired, and I got an awful scare to-night. I just missed freezing, and if it hadn’t been for Mr. Chapin, by this time I’d probably be somewhere down on the Golf Course frozen stiff and stark, and you’d be minus a room-mate. But thank goodness, I’m here all right, and if I can only once get thoroughly warmed I guess I’ll pull through. I’ll go to bed and take all the hot water bottles and blankets you can find, heaped up ‘in rank profusion,’ and by morning I’ll have forgotten all about it. Oh, I almost forgot about your news. What is it? Can’t you tell me now while you’re helping me?”

“No, it will keep; let me get you into bed first, and then I’ll see whether you can stand the shock or not.”

Soon Jean was lying in her own bed almost hidden from sight by the blankets which Anne had piled one on top of another, and insisted that Anne should relieve her mentally, as she had physically, and tell her the great news.

“Well,” began Anne, “it’s just this: At the Faculty meeting this afternoon, after much argument, that august body decided to grant our petition; and we can have men, for the first time in the history of the college, at our senior dance. I was just writing to Billy when you came in, to have him save the date; for the girls decided right after the meeting to hustle it up and have it two weeks from last night, before the Thornton Dramatics. Isn’t it perfectly wonderful to think of dancing with real live men, instead of make-believes, at our own senior dance. Now, if there’s nothing more I can do for you, I think I’ll put out the lights so you can sleep and I’ll go back and finish my letter. I suppose you’ll write Bob in the morning. I’m crazy to have him come, for you know I’ve never danced with him yet, and I’ve been wanting to all the year.”

“Don’t worry on that score, Anne; when I

write I'll tell him to save you every other dance. Now don't let me keep you another minute. You've been awfully good to me, and I feel lots better already. Give my best to Billy, and tell him I had a queer dream about him the other night, which I'll try and remember to tell him at the dance." And then as she said good-night, Anne switched off the lights and went quietly out of the room.

At last after days of waiting came the night of the Senior Dance, and the girls and their guests wended their way to the gymnasium. As they entered they found it was lighted by hundreds of varicolored Japanese lanterns. Long strings of smilax hung on the walls, the orchestra was concealed behind banks of palms, and along both sides of the room were boxes formed by fir trees in which the girls were to receive their friends. The patronesses were to receive the guests at the north end of the room in front of a background of palms and flowers.

Jean and Bob were among the last to arrive, for Bob had missed his train from Cambridge, and finding no other means of conveyance had

been obliged to wait an hour for another. But Jean was not at all dismayed at thought of finding Bob partners, for the orders had been made out days before; then, too, Bob hated dancing, so as a special inducement Jean had offered him as many of her dances as he wanted, and he had wanted every other one and all the extras besides, although he declared he should insist upon sitting most of them out.

One dance followed another; the music was perfect, the floor like wax; the dresses of the girls soft and filmy; and a feeling of good fellowship and happiness prevailed. And although Jean's mirror had not failed to tell her how beautiful she was that night in her shimmering pale-green gown, if you had looked closely you might have detected a worried look in her eyes and a restless anxiety beneath her apparent gayety. To-morrow she must meet Professor Leighton and tell him her decision about the two years in Leipsic; every day since he had told her about it she had turned the matter over and over, first coming to one conclusion and then to another, but never really reaching a decision. As yet she had not men-

tioned it to any one, but she felt she could keep it to herself no longer, so after she and Bob left the supper-room, to Bob's astonishment, Jean declared she was so tired she did not want to dance the next three or four dances and asked him if he minded sitting them out with her in the little gallery, which had been decorated with trees and furniture to make a cozy corner for just such emergencies. Bob was only too glad, and they left the crowded floor and to their delight found the cozy corner unoccupied.

Jean was strangely silent at first, but after one or two trivial remarks, with a hysterical little laugh and a burst of tears she said:

"Bob, I'm going to Leipsic with Professor Leighton to study for two years."

Once it was out, Jean was as surprised as Bob, and it took them both several moments to recover from their astonishment. They then discussed it seriously for a long time, and when they left the balcony for the dancing again, there was a new light in Jean's eyes and a quiet, happy look on her face in place of the tired expression which had rested there earlier

in the evening. For with her decision to go away for two years had come a certain promise to Bob for something at the end of that two years which would be worth waiting for all that time; and then Bob laughingly whispered:

“Perhaps something may keep you from going, and I sha’n’t have to wait so long after all.”

When they began to dance again, everything seemed different; Jean danced as she had never danced before. Her feet scarcely seemed to touch the floor, and even Bob declared dancing was never like this. With real reluctance they heard the last notes of the last encore die away, and then Jean exclaimed:

“Oh, it’s all over. I never hated to have a dance end so much in all my life. Hasn’t it been perfect!”

Bob declared that it had and added, “But we’ll say nothing about it till June.”

After the good-nights had been said, the men started in their various directions homeward, the gymnasium shrouded in darkness, the wonderful dance a thing of the past, the Gamma

Chi girls found themselves up in Lois Underwood's room drinking hot chocolate. Between ecstatic reminiscences Lois suddenly spoke out above the others, exclaiming:

"Seems to me you danced pretty often with Bob, Jean, and I lost track of you entirely several times. Were you trying out the balcony?"

"Why, I didn't dance more than half the dances with him, and I confess I did sit out some of them, but I had a perfect right to. I spent most of the day decorating the place and it's some work arranging those fir trees, and I was dead tired before I started. If I'm ever chairman of another decorating committee I'll hire some one to do the hard work; it's almost too much to ask of any one to work all day and dance all night."

"But, girls, speaking of Jean's dancing so often with Bob," broke in Anne, "did you notice Vee Montgomery? She danced every single dance with her man and I didn't see her introduce him to a soul. Such devotion! The mean thing to keep such a good-looker all to herself. I can't understand it, for she's gen-

erally so anxious to let us know all about her men. Who can throw any light on the matter?"

"I can't," replied Lois, "but I didn't particularly like his looks; he was big and broad-shouldered, all right, but there was something about his manner that wasn't just right. How about the rest of you?"

"I think it's perfectly scandalous for a girl to dance every dance with one man, no matter how much they're in love, or think they are," said Anne. "I scent a mystery in this. Who's the villain?"

"Well, Anne, we'll appoint you a committee of one to investigate this matter. You generally land things, once you get on the scent. Tell us who was Vee's ardent admirer to-night and we'll pay your bill at Conant's this month. What do you say, girls? We'll give her until to-morrow night at ten o'clock, and if she doesn't solve the mystery by that time, we'll make her treat us all to Saturday dinner at the Inn."

Cries of approval seconded Lois's suggestion, and Anne instantly arose and shouted:

“ I’ll do it, I’ll do it, if it takes my life. Vee and I haven’t spoken since the ‘Circus,’ but I’ll ferret out the secret of her life, for when you see my bill at Conant’s, you’ll think it was worth risking everything for. You’ve saved my life, for I didn’t possibly see how I could pay the bill and go to New York for the Easter vacation. Au revoir, me to my downy couch to dream out my plan of campaign. Not a word till to-morrow night, but meet me here as the clock is striking ten, and I’ll reveal the story of Vera Montgomery’s dark and dubious past.”

So the next night the girls awaited Anne’s arrival in Lois’s room and just as the clock was striking ten she came hurrying in, her eyes sparkling, so that no one doubted she had been successful in her day’s work. She waved a piece of paper in the faces of the girls and shouted:

“ Here it is, girls, my bill at Conant’s, just came to-day. I hand it over to you to pay, for listen, I’ve won, but first, I must pledge you to secrecy, not one word of what I am about to tell you and second, don’t ask me for any

explanations. Only this much I can say — Vee Montgomery took her father's chauffeur to our dance. He's French and doesn't speak much English, so naturally she wasn't over anxious for us to meet him. It seems she asked about a dozen of her numerous admirers, and none of them could come, so at the last moment she telegraphed her father to send the chauffeur, for she knew he was good-looking and a wonderful dancer — and there you have it! Isn't it rich? It would have been bad enough for any of the rest of us, but Vee — Oh, I forgot to add that his name is Maurice. That's his front name, but the rest is simply unpronounceable. Now cross your hands, and swear not to breath a word of what I'm telling you."

"But how do we know she's telling the truth, girls?" said Lois. "This sounds just like one of her yarns."

"Well, Lois, I must say I like that," replied Anne. "It's the gospel truth, and you can believe it or not, just as you please. I'm dead sorry I can't take you to Vee herself to prove it, but she left this afternoon for her cousin's

wedding in Providence. Anyway you promised to pay the bill, and here it is. I am telling you the truth this time, if I never did before; so good-night. I've a whole book to read for review to-morrow. It's a rich one on the fastidious Vera, but it's certainly helped out my finances tremendously. Three cheers for Maurice the chauffeur!" and Anne put her arm round Jean, and started with her out of the room.

CHAPTER XI

ANNE'S AUCTION

NEXT morning Jean was awakened very early by insistent little cries from Anne's bed.

"Oh, Jean, do wake up. I've been awake for perfect hours, and I can't stand it any longer. I've got an awful sore-throat, which I didn't have a sign of when I went to bed last night, and I've had an awful dream, and the strange thing about it is that I think there's some connection between the two. If I don't tell some one about it soon, I'll die, for I've lain here and shivered with fright ever since it first began to grow light."

"What is it, Anne? Do tell me at once; it must be something very serious indeed to keep you awake, for generally the difficulty comes in trying to keep you from sleeping. I'll go over into your bed, and then you won't have to talk so loud and tire your throat.

And as soon as you get up, you must do something so that it won't get any worse. There, now, I'm ready; do begin."

"Well, it seemed as though we were living in Merton again, which was like a convent or monastery of dark gray stone, built in low, rambly mediæval fashion. I had come down to breakfast a little late, and as I entered the dining room, I happened to cough slightly once or twice, but thought nothing about it until afterward. I took my seat with the girls as usual, and began to eat breakfast. I had eaten but a few mouthfuls when Mrs. Thompson, dressed like a Sister of Charity, came up to me, and said she would like to speak to me in her room as soon as I had finished breakfast. Realizing as I did that we girls were never called into her room unless something serious threatened us, I had some difficulty in finishing the meal, as I turned over in my mind one after another possible offenses I might have committed during the week. I could decide upon no one thing, for my conduct had been exceptionally good for me, and I felt I deserved reward rather than punishment.

“Plucking up my courage, I hastened to Mrs. Thompson’s room, and after knocking timidly was told to enter and seat myself beside the table opposite her. After what seemed hours she began, ‘You have a severe cold, Miss Cockran. I heard you cough as you entered the dining-room for breakfast, and I have been thinking the matter over since. How does it happen that you have neglected it, when you know one of our strictest rules is that every form of disease must be attended to as soon as the first symptom is detected? What have you to say for yourself?’

“‘But, Sister,’ I gasped, ‘I haven’t a cold. I did cough, perhaps, when I came into the dining-room, but it is the first time I have coughed for months and I feel perfectly well.’

“‘That is no excuse,’ she answered; ‘you have a cold, and I wish you to go to Mother Emerson at once with this letter I have written her, and return to me after you have talked with her.’ Now you can imagine the fear and consternation that filled my heart at the mere mention of the name Mother Emerson, for never in my worst days had I been sent to her,

and I dreaded it as I had never before dreaded anything in my life. As I was loath to leave the room, I did not stir until I heard the door opened and felt myself pushed rather roughly out of the room, and left alone in the dark passage. As I knew Sister Thompson stood at her door watching me, I did not dare do otherwise than what she had told me, and I hurried toward the door of our Mother Superior's room.

“It was the first time I had ever been alone in her presence, and I trembled like a leaf as I knelt down before her. After she had told me to arise and sit down on the floor at her feet, she read the letter I had put into her hands upon entering, and then coming to me said, ‘Anne, let me look you over.’ She closely examined my throat and felt of me here and there without a word, and then said slowly, ‘Anne, you are going to have diphtheria. Now diphtheria is generally fatal, and always contagious, so you must be buried this afternoon at three. You will go directly back to Sister Thompson, and she will take you down to the coffin vault in order that you may be

fitted to your coffin. Then you may return to your own room, put everything in order, write a letter to your mother or father, dress yourself in your prayer robes and spend the rest of the morning in prayer for the forgiveness of your sins. I will have some food carried to your room at one o'clock, and at ten minutes of three I myself shall come to lead you down again to the coffin vault, and as the clock strikes three, you will bid farewell to this world. That is all, if you understand my directions.'

" 'Oh, Mother Emerson,' I screamed, 'bury me alive! What are you saying? I'm not sick, I haven't a cold, I haven't diphtheria, and I don't want to die. Please, oh, please, let me live!'

" 'Not another word, Anne. I have said you are to die, because you coughed twice this morning in Sister Thompson's presence; your throat has three patches upon it now; and you cannot escape diphtheria. For the sake of the other girls who must not be exposed and so run the risk of death, you should be willing to sacrifice yourself. I am astonished at your

selfishness. And finally, remember it is not that you have diphtheria now, but that you may have it to-morrow, which necessitates my acting thus.'

"I hardly know how I got back to Sister Thompson's room, and told her what Mother Superior had said to me; but I must have done so, for the next thing I knew she was putting a lighted taper into my hand, and taking one herself told me to follow her. Down endless dark and gloomy passages we walked, each one getting narrower and damper than the one before, until it seemed as though one could go no farther and breathe. And then we stopped, and she bade me knock three times on what she said was a door. It did not seem as though I had the strength to knock once, but after I had tried it twice, the stone door opened, and a flood of light from myriads of tapers revealed the ugliest little man in the world and a great room filled with nothing but coffins. Without a word we two stepped into the room; the door was closed; Sister Thompson whispered a few words to the little man, and then taking me by the hand said, 'Stand

up here, Anne Cockran, and let Cephéro measure you.'

"I felt his long skinny fingers pass over my body, and I shut my eyes to get away from his gruesomeness and the horror of the room. But in a moment he seized my hand and led me to the farthest corner of the room. I felt, rather than saw, the stealthy figure of Sister Thompson behind me, and I knew that guarded as I was by these two human monsters, there was no escape. Finally we stopped, and she said, 'Here is something that seems to be about your size. You may get into it now, and see if you can lie down comfortably. There may be something for Cephéro to do before we return this afternoon.'

"I stepped upon a stone, which seemed to be there for that very purpose, and climbed into the cold stone coffin. Quaking in every limb, I lay down and found it a perfect fit. Then Sister Thompson lifted, as though by superhuman strength, an immense stone cover, and said, 'There, Anne Cockran, everything seems to be all right. Cephéro certainly made a success of this one, for generally there is a great

deal to be done. Now it will be exactly like this at three o'clock, only instead of holding this cover above your head as I am doing now, I shall drop it as soon as you lie down, and a few moments after you will stop breathing, and Ashton will go on without you.'

"If she said more, I did not hear it. The next thing I knew, I was being lifted out of the coffin by that awful creature, Cephero, and commanded by Sister Thompson to follow her back to her room by the same way we had come. It seemed as though we would never reach the end of those awful passages, but we did, and then she took me by the arm as though she were afraid I might escape her and led me to our room, for it seemed as though you and I were rooming together there. With the parting words, 'Follow out Mother Emerson's instructions exactly,' she left me, and I fairly staggered into the room, and you caught me as I was about to fall to the floor.

"When I was able to tell you in whispers what had happened, you burst into tears, exclaiming, 'How terrible, Anne! What can we do? You must not die like this. It is the

most cruel thing I ever heard of. But wait a minute. I have it! I think I can save you after all. I have a written permission to go to Cesta Williams's house at twelve o'clock. Now you can go in my place, and wear my long cloak and the hood over your face, and as you go out of the door hand Sister Whiting my written permission signed by Sister Thompson, and she will let you out without suspecting it is you instead of me. You know she's almost blind, and can hardly distinguish us girls. Once out you can go to the nearest telephone, and call up the police, and by the time Mother Emerson will have come to our room for you, and demanded an explanation of me, the police following you can rush in and save everything. Isn't it worth trying?'

"I agreed that it was, and we worked feverishly until noon, when, wrapped close in your cloak and hood and clutching the permission slip, I walked softly down the corridor to the outer door. Just as I was on the point of putting the slip into Sister Whiting's hand, I heard a step behind me, then felt an arm laid upon my shoulder, and after some one had peered

into my face, I heard that awful voice of Sister Thompson saying, 'So this is the way you disobey me, is it, Anne Cockran? I suspected as much. For this offense you shall not only die yourself, but at the same time and in the same way, your accomplice, Jean Cabot, shall die. Go back to your room and tell her what I say, only from now on I shall follow you every moment until you die, for you have proved that you cannot be trusted.'

"But I heard no more, for suddenly I opened my eyes, and found myself here in bed shivering as though it were the coldest day in winter, and strange to say, I realized instantly that I had a sore-throat and a chill. Now I've told you the dream, but how do you account for it? Do you wonder I was frightened nearly to death?"

"It is awful, Anne; and I don't wonder you were frightened. Why didn't you speak to me before? I can explain it only in this way. If I remember right, you were reading your mediæval history the last thing before you went to sleep last night, and got your mind filled with thoughts of convents and the cruel-

ties of the middle ages. Then you probably caught cold running round the campus to find out that scandal about Vera Montgomery. Seems to me when you came into Lois's room from out doors at ten o'clock, you didn't wear a coat or sweater, but just your sailor-suit. It was a very chilly night, and probably you started a cold or sore-throat then. Now don't you think you really should have worn a sweater?"

"Yes, Jean; but positively I haven't one that will hold together long enough to wear."

"That's no excuse, Anne; you know I have several, and you're welcome to mine any time."

"I know, dear, but I'm always borrowing something of yours, and I get absolutely tired of it. But I confess I need another sweater pretty badly just now, for these late spring days, and I can't possibly stretch my allowance far enough to get a new one before Commencement. I don't understand why it is that I am always dead broke, and still have nothing to show for all the money I spend. I can't complain about my allowance, for dear old Dad is generosity itself. But I have a proposition,

Jean; will you make me a price on one of your second-hand sweaters? I won't take it as a gift, for I know you will offer it, but I'd love to buy one, so it would be my very own to use just as I wanted to. Probably I'd no sooner have it than I'd lose it in the 'Pond,' or loan it to some departing guest who would never remember to return it,—that's generally the way my things go. But what do you say to my proposition, Jean? Name your price, and you shall have it."

"Why, Anne, I couldn't sell you any of my things; but you're welcome to a sweater and anything else I have that you want. I've loads of things I must get rid of before the end of June. Why, I've never thought of what I was going to do with all my worn out clothes and my pictures and furniture. I can't take them down to Maine or back to California with me. What do people generally do with such things?"

"Oh, Jean, wait a minute before you say another word; I've got the most glorious scheme you ever heard of. Let's have an auction and sell off all our old things! I've got

a lot, too, when you come to think of it, and I'll collect everything I can find in the other girls' rooms and give them a certain percentage of what their things sell for. We can serve tea and crackers, and invite all our friends and make a regular party out of it. I'm dying for a party. We haven't had one for ages. Then when it's all over, we'll divide the money; you can give yours to the Foreign Missionary Society or the Fiji Islanders or the Ashton Athletic Association, if you want to, but mine goes to buy some Commencement luxuries. What do you say to that?"

"It's a fine idea, Anne, but are you perfectly sure it's what one might expect from two dignified seniors?"

"Why, I don't see anything so very undignified about it. It's a perfectly honest way to earn a little money, and so long as the means justify the ends I fail to see where any one can find any fault with it. It isn't as though we were going to cheat people, for we'll give them more than their money's worth every time. I'll ask Miss Emerson, if you think best."

"Why, no, Anne, of course there's no need of that; the more I think of it the better I like the idea, but instead of giving my share of the money to any one else, I'll give it to you if you'll take the responsibility and management of the affair. I'm up to my ears now in work for the play, and it doesn't seem as though I could take on another thing, and besides everything else I want to have that tea for Mother when she comes, and as her coming is so very indefinite, that will take time, too. But you go ahead with this, for you really haven't anything extra just now, and you're way ahead in your work and sure of passing everything."

"All right, Jean, so long as I have your approval, I'll go ahead, and see what I can do with my 'Get - Rich - Quick - Wallingford' scheme."

Several days later gaudy posters adorned the campus trees, announcing the forthcoming auction, with special warning to come early on account of the limited space of the auction room, and adding that tea and crackers would be served to all guests. The Gamma Chi girls

became highly excited over the event, and ransacked their closets and drawers and bookcases for available material. On the day itself great quantities of things poured into Anne's room. Beds and tables were piled high, and in every corner were boxes and baskets of "saleables." Pieces of furniture had to be put along both sides of the hall as well, and on every projection were hung wares to tempt the feminine eye. Some of the things looked almost new, and others were so frayed and worn that even a West Side rummage sale would have scorned them. There were coats and sweaters, scarfs and hats, shirt-waists, middy blouses, all kinds of shoes and slippers, ribbons and an infinite variety of neckwear, underclothes, table-covers and soft pillows, dishes and cooking utensils, candlesticks and jardinières, every known kind of jewelry, fans, curling irons, books and magazines by the dozens, pictures, hot-water bags and sticky medicine bottles,—everything, in fact, that might have collected in a girl's room during her four years at college.

The girls began to arrive long before the

hour set for the actual sale, but this gave them the desired opportunity to look around and see what they really wanted. By four o'clock there was not another inch of room either on the scene of action or in the hallway. Girls were packed in like sardines, and were clutching madly at their pocketbooks and bags, as though they feared if they once lost them in the mad scramble, they would never be able to locate them again. They were mostly personal friends of Anne and Jean from all the classes, but there was a good smattering of others, who had come as much from curiosity as for the good time. Here and there were ambitious freshmen, who had undoubtedly come with the fixed determination to buy something that had belonged to these popular seniors, and then boast of it all through sophomore year.

Anne, as the auctioneer, wore a long linen duster over her sailor-suit, a huge red bandana handkerchief round her neck, a slouch hat set rakishly on her head, and carried a broken riding crop in her hand. She mounted a table in the middle of the room, and began:

“ Well, girls, before I go on with the real sale of these valuable articles, I have one announcement to make. We desire that everything bought to-day shall be paid for and taken away at the close of the sale, except, of course, the furniture, which of necessity must remain in our rooms until after Commencement. However, we will give you guarantee tickets which will enable you to claim said articles at that time. In case of undergraduates who will leave before Commencement, we will see that said articles are placed in their respective rooms, upon the receipt of sufficient money to pay for transportation. If this is clearly understood, we are ready to begin. The first article for sale is this sweater, slightly worn, to be sure, but still good for several years. How much am I offered? ”

There was lively competition, for several girls recognized it as one of Jean's,—a long, woolly gray one with great deep pockets. It finally went to Phœbe Batelli at a fabulous figure, far above its original value; but money was nothing to Phœbe Batelli when she wanted a thing, and she could already see herself in

the future strolling the campus dressed in her new possession, which she had finally outbid from Hortense Day, a haughty junior in her dormitory. One thing followed another amid shouts of laughter at Anne's witty remarks and the excited voices of the bidders, as they ran the prices up higher and higher, sometimes in the real desire to possess a thing, but more often to get it away from some one else.

When most of the smaller articles were gone, Anne suddenly discovered a pair of pearl earrings, department store pearls, without a doubt, — and held them up as a great treasure.

“Here, girls, is the real treasure of the afternoon, the discarded ear-rings of a certain junior beauty. They have been through many varied experiences, have seen the Harvard-Yale game, been to the Yale Prom, over to Washington, to any number of dinners in town; they have listened to countless love sonnets and sweet nothings of adoring suitors, have kissed the fair ears of — well, never mind the name. How much am I offered for this art museum treasure? Start it high. No low bids considered.”

"Ten cents," came somewhere from the crowd, and a burst of laughter followed.

"Twenty cents!" And so on until one dollar was reached.

Then Anne began again: "What! only one dollar for the prize of the whole collection. I am astonished at your lack of judgment. Let me pass it among you that you may see there's no deception in the matter, and that the catches are all right. Here, see for yourselves. Once more, do I hear another bid? Come, come, I'm waiting for business."

And then to the surprise of every one, a deep voice somewhere down the crowded hallway cried out "Two dollars, two dollars," and every one turned to see who was so wildly extravagant. But after one glance Anne and Jean gasped with astonishment, and calling for a passageway, hurried down the hall to greet Mrs. Cabot, who had arrived so unexpectedly, and as they thought at the moment, so inopportunistically. But to their delight she entered into the auction with the right spirit, and declared that as she needed lots of things, this was a good opportunity to buy them.



"HOW MUCH AM I OFFERED FOR THIS ART MUSEUM TREASURE?
START IT HIGH."—*Page 223.*

So there was nothing to do but continue with the sale. But about half past five the last thing was sold, and the girls went down to the living room for tea. Mrs. Cabot instantly became the center of attraction and found herself continually surrounded by the old girls and the new ones, too, who seemed just as glad to meet her as the others.

"Well," said Jean to herself, "if this isn't the finest surprise. Here I have been planning all the spring to have a tea for Mother as soon as she arrived, and here she is, and the tea has been just as nice as though I had planned it especially for her. Only I'm sorry that she didn't bring the baby and that Miss Emerson and some of the faculty aren't here, but perhaps later I can have them by themselves."

When the last girl had gone, and Jean and Anne and Mrs. Cabot were in their room counting the money, Anne cried out:

"Why, Jean Cabot, will you believe it, we've made \$148.76! Why, it doesn't seem possible! But I could never keep all that money for myself. I should feel like a robber. I tell you what we'll do. We'll take it to Miss Em-

erson, and ask her if we can start a scholarship to be called the 'Gamma Chi Scholarship.' What do you think of it, Jean?"

"It's splendid, Anne, and I'll add a hundred dollars to it. That will make a better start."

"And I'll add enough to make it five hundred dollars," said Mrs. Cabot, "and I'm proud to think of you girls doing it. Will it be allowable, even if I'm not a full-fledged Gamma Chi, but just an honorary faculty member?"

"Well, I guess a little thing like that won't make any difference," affirmed Anne. "Can we go to Miss Emerson's to-night? I'm so anxious to get rid of this money. It fairly burns my hands. Hasn't it been loads of fun and one grand success?"

"Yes, it has," replied Jean; "but I can't quite see where you've gained anything out of it. You're giving up all the money you worked so hard for, and you didn't buy a sweater or anything else for yourself. So as far as I can see you've lost all around."

"No, she hasn't," said Mrs. Cabot. "She's won a great deal I think by giving the money

for a scholarship, and then I've brought you both a sweater. It's a queer coincidence, but in town yesterday when I was shopping, I saw some new imported coat-sweaters and so I couldn't resist buying two, knowing as I did that Jean had a birthday to-morrow. So after all I think Anne's come out at the best end of the auction. But now sit down and rest a bit before dinner, and tell me all about yourselves, and to-night we'll run over to Miss Emerson's and talk with her about the scholarship."

CHAPTER XII

MAY DAYS

WHEN Miss Emerson was told that evening of the proposed Gamma Chi scholarship, she was delighted, and said she would lay the matter before the trustees immediately. If they approved, as she knew they would, she would keep it a secret until the Commencement dinner, when she would present it, with some other pleasing announcements, to the whole body of the alum-næ. But pleased as she was with this surprise, she seemed to be equally so to see Mrs. Cabot again and begged her to remain as her guest. Mrs. Cabot explained, however, that she had only run over from New York under protest for two days with Jean, so she could help celebrate her birthday, and had left the baby in care of the nurse and Mr. Cabot for the time being, but only on condition that she keep her promise and return on Friday. Miss

Emerson then insisted that unless she could come on again with the baby, she must promise to assist at her reception Commencement Day. This was indeed an honor which Mrs. Cabot appreciated, and she accepted with a great deal of pleasure.

Every moment of her short visit was filled with pleasure for Jean, and with much reluctance she saw her board the Limited for New York. But she knew it would be only a little while before she would return with the rest of the family for Commencement week, and she went back to Ashton to settle down to work again.

And then came those golden days of May and June, days filled to the brim with mingled happiness and sadness; when one almost forgets the bitterness of final examinations and parting in the rapid succession of pleasures. These are the seniors' days, and if occasionally an underclass girl rises into prominence for a brief space, she soon sinks back into oblivion as the sweet girl graduate hurries here and there on her round of gaiety.

May was almost gone, when on a balmy

Saturday afternoon all Ashton was gathered on the campus for the seniors' May Day. The velvety green grass, the budding trees and shrubbery, and the warm sunshine would have been enough to entice any one out of doors, but added to these was the promise of a Maypole dance, the crowning of a May Queen, hoop-rolling and folk dances, which thronged the grounds with undergraduates and alumnae. Just beyond the gymnasium, where the campus drops into a hollow, like an old Roman amphitheater, was erected the Maypole, a real picture-card Maypole with a gilt ball on top and long streamers of blue and white, the class colors. It seemed as though every inch of room on the slopes of this miniature amphitheater was filled with girls in white gowns and vari-colored "blazers" and coats, awaiting the arrival of the seniors. And when, in cap and gown, they first came into sight, winding up and down the slopes of the campus, two by two, carrying baskets of flowers and bearing on their shoulders long twisted streamers of blue and white, there

arose a mighty cry of, "The seniors! The seniors! Here come the seniors!" And then everybody broke into "Alma Mater" and sang verse after verse until all the seniors had reached the Maypole.

Then the class president announced that the class had chosen Edith Anderson, president of the freshman class, as it's May Queen; and walking over to where Edith was sitting, she took her by the arm, and led her to the throne of honor which had been erected just beyond the Maypole. Here she was crowned with a beautiful wreath of arbutus and invested with the robe of state, a long white dress decorated with asparagus fern, and then she was commanded to make a speech. Blushing, stammering, hesitating, she finally managed to express her surprise and appreciation of the honor conferred upon her by the senior class and ended abruptly by asking that the regular programme be continued. At this came shouts from all the classes and songs of greeting to the queen, who was next invited to dig the first shovelful of earth that the class-

tree, a gorgeous rhododendron, might be planted to perpetuate the glory of the seniors-to-be.

After this serious ceremony was over, the seniors left their friends, the sophomores, to entertain their guests with some folk dances, while they repaired to the gymnasium for a change of costume. Almost quicker than it takes to tell it, instead of the dignified black robed seniors, a hundred or so boys and girls of every nationality in the world trooped down to the Maypole. Sixteen of them stepped forward, and clasping a streamer, began the Maypole dance. In relays the whole class wound and unwound the streamers, and then leaving that behind, they invited every one to join them in playing "Tag," "London Bridge Is Falling Down," "Hide and Seek" and "Drop the Handkerchief." Suddenly, as though by magic, hurdy-gurdies appeared, and even the haughty juniors could not resist the call, but rollicked and frolicked like ten-year-olds with the rest of the girls until the chapel bell rang out the hour of five.

Then the seniors ran to the gymnasium, as though obeying some fairy godmother's command to return at five or lose forever the joys of youth, and in a trice came out on the campus again, each one rolling an enormous hoop. Being little experienced in the gentle art of hoop-rolling, most of them had some difficulty at first in manipulating these slippery toys, which went helter and skelter to right and to left, as the owners followed in mad pursuit down over the campus. But it was fun, such fun! and the more they did it the better they liked it, so they rolled and rolled until sheer exhaustion compelled the leaders to sit down and rest.

Jean was lying in the cool green grass under a brilliant red beech with a dozen or more of the seniors, when Anne came hurrying up, and whispered in her ear, "Jean, do you know what time it is? We'll never make that six-nineteen train in the world. Are you packed? And where are Bess and Lois and the rest of the girls? I hope your suit-case isn't full, for I want to put my things with yours. You see I loaned mine to Priscilla

Benton last week, and she hasn't returned it yet, and I haven't time to hunt her up now. Do please come down to the house with me."

"In just a minute, Anne, but I must get my breath first. I never was so tired in all my life. Why, I'm sure I've lost a good five pounds racing round this campus all the afternoon; and I've laughed at the girls until it seems as if there would never be another bit of laugh left in me. Aren't these costumes screamingly funny? Why! every time I look at myself I wonder how I ever got into this one. It doesn't seem as if I ever could be grown up again. But you're right; we must hurry, for I haven't packed anything either, and it will take me some minutes to get out of this suit, for I'm pinned together in a thousand places. There's Bess and Lois coming towards us now, and probably we'll find Rosalie and Polly at the house, for the last time I saw Polly she said she was going down early."

"All right, Jean; let me help you up. There, you've ripped a seam after all my care. Good-bye, girlyes; see you Wednesday, if noth-

ing happens in the meantime, but if for any reason I don't come back, some one please take my diploma at Commencement, and have it framed, and hung in the college library, or the chapel will do, if anybody thinks I'm not literary enough for the library. Have a good time over the holiday and don't any of you do any studying, for there's enough of that ahead of us in the next two weeks!"

"There, that will do, Anne," said Jean; "you were hurrying me not very long ago, and now you seem perfectly willing to scatter your good advice indefinitely. We simply must hurry.

When the girls reached the house, they found the others running around excitedly calling for this or that which seemed to be among the missing. Polly, in hat and coat, with her suit-case packed and her watch in her hand, stood in the doorway calling out the hour. She fairly pushed Jean and Anne up the stairs, as she announced in stentorian tones:

"Girls, the train leaves in just twenty minutes, and there isn't another to-night which

makes connection for Black River, so you must hurry, or we'll have to wait until the morning train, and I'd rather not go at all than do that. Please hurry. O dear, I think I must start along and buy the tickets and perhaps I can hold the train for a few minutes if you aren't there in time. I'm so excited I just can't stand here and wait for you."

"Now don't get so nervous, Polly, dear," said Jean; "we'll make it all right. That's a good idea of yours about starting ahead and buying the tickets. You'd better do it, and we'll surely be there before the train pulls out. There, start along, that's a dear."

The cause of all this excitement was an invitation from Anne Cockran's mother to six of the Gamma Chi girls, for a week-end party over Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, which included Memorial Day, at her summer home at Black River, a quiet little town on the South Shore. The same six had already arranged to spend the summer months together in an old-fashioned farmhouse in Maine which Rosalie Warner's aunt had offered them, while she was in Europe.

Mrs. Cockran was to meet them in Boston on this Saturday afternoon, and chaperone them for the rest of the time. She was a little late in reaching the station, but when she hurried up to the information office, where she had agreed to meet them, she found the six, Rosalie and Polly, Bess and Lois, Jean and Anne,—with their pile of suit-cases and so many coats and sweaters that Polly declared it looked as though they were going to Europe for the summer instead of to the beach for three days. On the way over to the South Station and on the South Shore train, they all vied with each other to give Mrs. Cockran the best account of the afternoon's fun and their mad rush for the six-nineteen train, and after they had finished and paused for breath she began to tell them about Black River and the cottage they were to stay in.

But before she had got very far in her story, the conductor called out their station, and they gathered up their luggage and departed. Mrs. Cockran had written for a beach wagon to meet them, for it was some distance to her cottage, and as early as this in the season the

creaking old stage-coach and the more modern automobile had not begun their regular trips. It was rather a tight squeeze for the driver and his seven passengers and their belongings, but the girls didn't mind it a bit, and if the bashful driver did, he was tactful enough not to mention it. They drove fully ten miles over the marshes in the fading twilight; but their hearts were light, although their bodies were tired, and they laughed and talked, and every now and then burst into little snatches of song, for the music of the afternoon still lingered in their thoughts.

"We're almost there," said Anne; "just down this road. Our house is the only one on the beach, or rather the river. There are some big houses back of us and one or two fishermen's huts below, but we feel as though we owned the River Road. Are all your backs broken, girls?"

"No," answered Polly; "mine isn't, and I love this country, as much of it as I have seen, anyway. I wouldn't mind riding for another hour or two. Isn't this salt air delicious? It makes me think of lobsters and fish and clam-

bakes, and all those things one hears about, but never has."

"We'll ride all the afternoon to-morrow, if you like, Polly," said Mrs. Cockran. "Our favorite drive is to the Light House, but it's fifteen miles each way. Do you think you could stand that?"

"Stand it! Why, there's nothing I'd like better; my only regret is that we can't start this very minute."

"Oh, Polly! Polly!" cried Bess, "when are you ever going to grow up and acquire some dignity and patience?"

"Never, Bessie dear; I just couldn't."

"Here we are, girls, all out," said Anne, as the horses stopped before a large brown bungalow; and as the girls alighted she added, "If you don't like the looks of our humble abode, you can stay in the wagon, and Tom will take you right back to the station. Isn't very thickly populated round here, is it? Just one light in sight, and that's in old Sned's hut. Sned is our favorite fisherman,—fine old fellow when he's sober, but he will drink, and when he's drunk he's so ugly he's simply un-

bearable, but he generally knows enough to keep out of the way. Perhaps he'll take us sailing, or if his nephew Jerry is here we can hire him to take us out. Poor Jerry has a hard time of it with him, but welcome, girls; make yourselves perfectly at home," and Anne unlocked the door and the girls followed her into the big living room.

It did not take long to start a roaring fire in the huge stone fireplace and get the supper ready. Then the girls drew the table up in front of the fire and set thereon the good things which Mrs. Cockran had brought with her. It looked as though there was enough to feed a small army instead of six girls, but an afternoon on a college campus, a train ride, and a ten-mile drive in the open air over salt marshes, will do wonders in the way of getting up an appetite. So most of the food disappeared in an amazingly short time, and nothing more was said that night about being hungry. After the dishes were done, Polly suggested a walk on the beach, but a thick mist began to roll in from the ocean, and a few moments on the piazza gave them all the air

they wanted that night. They went back to the warm fire again to read aloud, but the heat made them so sleepy they soon gave it up, and by a unanimous vote decided to go to bed and get up early next morning for a walk.

But it is one thing to go to bed and quite another to go to sleep when six girls are on a lark and feel that nobody cares. Just as the house was about to settle into quiet, some one would start, "Oh, here's to Gamma Chi," or "Dear Alma Mater," in which the others would find themselves joining in spite of their professed sleepiness. Somewhere in the wee small hours even these outbursts ceased, and every one slept, that is, every one but Jean. But she lay perfectly wide awake, and turned first to one side and then the other in a vain attempt to sleep. She could not have said what made her so restless; perhaps it was her unfinished thesis which was due the following Wednesday; perhaps it was the strange, new sound of the water as it beat on the rocky shore; perhaps it was a secret longing down in the depths of her heart; but whatever it may have been, she lay there staring at the darkness

and wondered. And then, all at once, she heard a sound which startled her, because she did not know what it could be. Again she heard it, and again, and then it came over her like a flash that some one was on the piazza, and was rattling the doorknob. She crept softly out of bed and slipping on her kimono, went into the living-room to see whether it was her imagination or if some one were really there.

The mists had cleared away, and the pale moon cast just light enough for her to feel her way along to the window nearest the front door. Then she heard a low mumbling, and she managed to make out the words:

“Let me in, Jerry. It’s Sned. Let me in, I say, or I’ll smash down the door.”

There was no doubt in her mind now, it was Sned, the old fisherman that Mrs. Cockran had told them about. He was probably returning home from a drunken spree in town, and had mistaken this house for his own. But what should she do? The others were so tired after their hard day that evidently they were sleeping too heavily to hear the noise,

and were entirely unconscious of the danger which seemed to be threatening their night's repose. Undoubtedly if Sned should attempt to smash the door they would be awakened and terrified by the noise. She wondered if by any chance a window had been left open, or the back door unlocked, by which he might effect an entrance if he were determined to do so. She had heard how persistent and ugly intoxicated men could be when obstacles balked their desires, and she began to get very frightened, and was on the point of calling the others. But just then the angry man made a desperate attempt to open the door and in doing so lost his balance and fell heavily down on the piazza, cursing loudly.

She listened for sounds of awakening from some of the girls, but none came, and she sank down on the window-seat to watch what would happen next. The old man made no attempt to rise, and lay perfectly still, mumbling inaudibly to himself. Apparently it was too much of an effort to get up, so he stretched out to make himself as comfortable as possible. Jean was relieved, for she felt if he once got

to sleep, he would not stir until morning, when he would find out his mistake and probably hurry away ashamed before any of the household were awake. But she was still uneasy, and could not go back to bed until she felt sure he was asleep. So she sat still for a long time and watched him, and the longer she watched the less fear and the more pity she felt. What a miserable existence his was, and what a wretched way for any one to spend the night! Was there anything she could do to help the old man? It must be cold out there, and perhaps his clothes were thin; at least she could cover him over with a steamer rug or something else that was warm. She crept over to the couch, pulled off a thick rug that Anne had put there the night before, and unlocking the door as quietly as she could, she stepped out into the night, and gently wrapped the rug around the old man so as not to awaken him. Then she looked about her. Down in the fisherman's hut she could see a dim light burning, and she wondered if the boy Jerry was still watching for his uncle's return, or if there had been so many of these

long nights of watching that he had dropped asleep in the hope that all was well. What was there in life for him that made for happiness?

So she stood for a long time until the chill air struck through her thin clothes, making her shiver, and turning back into the house, she softly closed the door again. With one last look at the sleeping man, she hurried back to her own room, and just as she was about to get into bed, Anne awoke, to her surprise, and called out sleepily:

“Why, Jean, what on earth are you doing up at this hour of the night?”

“Why, Anne, I couldn’t seem to get to sleep, so I got up for a drink of water. It’s too bad I woke you up. Go right to sleep again, you naughty girl.”

But if Anne heard the last words she said nothing, and seemed to be breathing peacefully again. Just as the first gray streaks of dawn appeared on the horizon, Jean dropped off to sleep, to dream perhaps of Maypole dances and hoop-rolling, drunken fishermen and midnight robberies.

The next thing she knew was Mrs. Cockran's cheery voice, saying, "Come girlyes, it's almost eleven o'clock; breakfast is ready. Are you going to sleep all day? I thought I wouldn't call you before, for it's pouring harder than I've seen it all the spring. Perhaps it's trying to make up in a day for all the dry weather we've been having. It looks as though we wouldn't get our ride to the Light House to-day, but content ourselves with staying indoors. Now hurry, please, or everything will be cold."

Jean wondered for a moment why everything seemed so strange to her, and why she was so glad to hear a familiar voice, and then she remembered her experience of the night, and tried to decide whether she had dreamed it all, or whether she really had seen old Sned lying drunk on the piazza. If it was real, Mrs. Cockran's steamer rug must be out there, and she was instantly seized with the desire to go to the window and see. After a moment, however, she decided that would be foolish, for Mrs. Cockran would wonder what was taking her out on the piazza in the rain before

she was dressed; and perhaps it was only a dream after all, so she made up her mind to say nothing about it just yet, but let things take their own course. But when she was dressed, and had gone out into the living-room she glanced at the couch, and saw the steamer rug in its accustomed place.

At the breakfast table as they were finishing their cereal, Mrs. Cockran exclaimed, "Oh, by the way, girls, which of you left my steamer rug out on the piazza last night?"

"Why, what do you mean, Mother? I'm sure none of us did," Anne burst out. "Polly and I had it wrapped round us when we came in from the piazza, and I remember folding it up and putting it on the couch. I locked up the house then and I'm sure none of us went out after that."

"Well, it's strange," replied Mrs. Cockran, "but when I opened the door this morning to look at the weather, I found the rug folded up close to the door. How do you suppose it got there?"

Nobody said anything for a moment and then Jean quietly answered, "Well, girls, I

guess I know more about it than anybody else. Perhaps I'd better confess."

When she had finished her story amid "Ohs" and "Ahs" and "How did you dares," Anne looked at her and said with a knowing smile:

"That accounts for the little white lie you told me last night about getting up for some water. I just remember it now."

"But I really did get some water, Anne, so it wasn't a lie after all."

And conversation during the rest of the meal centered upon Sned and his evil propensities.

About the middle of the afternoon the rain slackened considerably and someone proposed a walk. A thorough search of the closets, the cellar, and the shed brought forth enough oilskins, raincoats and sou'westers partially to protect the six and they sallied forth, single file, for a tramp in the rain. When they had gone about three miles and reached the Point where the surf was pounding up against the rocks, it began to pour down again, and the girls were soon very wet. But they decided

that as long as they couldn't get much wetter, they would climb down over the rocks and watch the surf. The slippery seaweed and the barnacles made this a rather difficult process, but finally they managed to reach the desired vantage point, and sat down, sole monarchs of all they surveyed. In a few moments, however, they lost their enthusiasm in the "Wetness, wetness everywhere," as they parodied Coleridge, and were willing to follow out Anne's suggestion that they hurry home for a change of raiment.

They found it more difficult to climb up the rocks than it had been to climb down, and there was much slipping and sliding, pushing and pulling before they made much headway. As luck would have it, Polly, who was the last one to leave, discovered halfway up that she had forgotten her sweater, and as it was a borrowed one, she felt obliged to go back and get it. Just as she was about to pick it up, she slipped, and with a terrified little scream fell into a pool of the foaming water. Back came the frightened girls, but by the time they reached Polly she had scrambled out of the

water, and was shaking herself like a wet spaniel.

"I'm all right girls! Don't look so frightened, all of you. I thought I was wet enough five minutes ago, but it was nothing to my present condition. How do I look? I feel all right. Fortunately the water wasn't very deep, and I landed on my feet instead of head first. Some one give me a hand, and I'll be upon terra firma again as quickly as the rest of you. That old sweater, it's more trouble than it's worth. I've a good mind to throw it in the water now, even if it does belong to some member of the famous Cockran family."

"Not on your life, Polly," said Anne. "That's Dad's favorite, and he'd never forgive me for lending it to you. Come, let me help you up; give Rosalie your other hand."

And this time the girls succeeded in reaching the top without accident. But now Polly began to realize how nearly she had come to a real calamity, and she began to tremble like a leaf. Before she had time to think more of herself, Anne suggested a cross-country run, and they were soon strung out along the beach

like a lot of runners in a veritable Marathon. By the time they reached the house Polly had almost forgotten about her narrow escape, and had as much color in her cheeks as the other girls; and Anne suggested that they say nothing about the accident to her mother, for if she knew about it, she would be sure to worry in the future whenever any one started for the Rocks.

Next day they rode to the Light House, took their lunch and had an all-day picnic. When they were returning home, they met Jerry down on the town road, and stopped him to make arrangements for a sail next morning. To their questions Jerry at first mumbled something about his uncle's not being well, but finally said he would be glad to take them out, if his uncle was willing to trust the boat to him. Mrs. Cockran knew that Jerry was as able to manage the boat as Sned himself, and was much more reliable, so she told the girls they might set any time agreeable to themselves for the sail. She herself would stay at home, for sailing always made her ill, and she did want to be able to start back to Boston in good

condition. So Anne decided that ten o'clock would be the best time to start provided, of course, there was enough wind, and they would take along plenty of lunch in case they didn't get back until two or three o'clock. Jerry agreed to have everything in readiness at Sned's little wharf by the appointed time, and, perhaps a bit weary at heart, he trudged home alone behind the crowded beach wagon of happy girls.

Tuesday morning was perfect for sailing, with a warm sun and a spanking breeze, and just before ten the girls hurried down to the wharf, for they had seen Jerry on the boat for some time, and they were anxious to be off if everything was in readiness. Jerry welcomed them in his usual quiet manner, and helped them politely on board the *Spider*, but he seemed a little more ill at ease than usual, and now and then looked back at the fisherman's cottage as though he were troubled about something. Just as the little sail caught the wind, and they left the wharf behind them, they heard loud cries, and turning, saw old Sned running down to the water's edge.

“Come back here, you young thief! Come back here with that boat. Come back, I say, or I’ll break every bone in your body,” and the tottering old man threw up his arms as though in despair, and cursed loudly as his boat left him farther and farther behind. Jerry, his face as white as the sail of his boat, looked straight ahead for a moment and said nothing. Then, after he seemed to have gained courage from his friend, the sea, he burst out:

“Don’t mind him; it’s my uncle. He’s not sick, as I said yesterday; he’s been drinking hard again, until he doesn’t know what he’s doing. I’m ashamed to have you see him like that, and I hoped we might get away before he woke up. I knew if he saw his boat going away without him, it would set him off on one of his tantrums. Not but what he’s willing I should use his boat. Why, he’s the most generous person in the world when he’s himself, and always tells me the boat’s mine as much as it is his, but there’s no accounting for his moods when he’s like that. Don’t pay any attention to him; he’ll go back to the hut and

sleep it off, and we'll be out of sight in a moment."

And the little boat swung out of the river into the harbor, and merrily rode the ocean waves. There was plenty of motion outside and the girls thought it was glorious, but after a little while Rosalie and Polly, who at first had been the gayest of the party, began to grow very quiet and soon begged Jerry to take them where it was smoother. Jerry laughingly declared this was smooth, and added that they must take things as they came, for one could never tell when a calm would strike them.

And then, as though to prove his very words, the wind died down and a flat calm struck them, and they bobbed up and down in the hot sunshine until Polly declared that she could stand it no longer, that it was worse than it had been when it was so rough. Jerry told her she might go down in the cabin, if she liked, and added to the others that they were welcome, too, but unfortunately the cabin only held two at a time comfortably, so they couldn't all go at once. Jean went down with

Polly, and left the others listening to Jerry's accounts of some recent fishing experiences.

He was just in the midst of a most thrilling story, when Jean came out of the little cabin carrying in her hands a beautiful old violin. "Why, Jerry, where did you get this violin? Do you play, or is it your uncle's? Tell me all about it, please, even if I am interrupting one of your favorite fish stories. I'm crazy over violin music. Do play if you can."

"All right, Miss, I'll try. Yes, it's mine, but I can't do much with it. I only know a few things I've picked out myself." And then Jerry gave the wheel to Anne and, placing the violin under his chin in the most caressing manner, began to play softly. And as he played on and on, apparently oblivious of his audience and his surroundings, the girls looked at each other in sheer amazement, and wondered how this boy, way down in a fisherman's hut on Black River, ever could have learned to play such melodies. They said nothing, however, until he paused; then Jean cried out:

"Oh, don't stop, Jerry; please go on, it's wonderful."

"I don't know anything more, Miss. I wish I did. You see I've only had a few lessons. Last summer there was a man from Boston up at Newman's, and he heard me playing one day, and offered to give me a few lessons, but he went away, and promised to come again this summer. If he does, I hope to take some more lessons, but that depends upon the money I can earn before then."

"But the violin, Jerry; where did it come from? It has the sweetest tone I ever heard. It must have a story, I'm sure, and I know the girls would rather hear that than any fish story. Please tell us."

"There isn't much to tell, Miss, my uncle knows more about it than I do. But it has something to do with my father, and I could never quite make out the story. My mother was Sned's sister, and she married a man who didn't do much, I guess, but play the violin. He lived in Germany when he was a young man, and ran away from home. He was poor, and the only thing of any value that he brought with him was this violin, which he said was worth its weight in gold, and had belonged to

his great-grandfather, who played it better than any one else in the country. When Father died, all he left to Mother was me and the violin, and the next year when Mother died, she left us both to Uncle Sned, who was her only relative. I've been with him fifteen years now, and I've tried to be happy with him, but it's hard work sometimes, and about the only comfort I get is to come out on the boat and play to myself. Why, the violin and I are the best friends in the world, and we wouldn't be parted for anything you could offer us. I'm afraid to keep it in the house for fear sometime he will sell it for whisky, for he's sold about everything else we ever had but this, so I hide it out here where he can't find it. Strange to say, though, he loves to have me play, and when we're sailing together he always wants me to play to him. He'll sit by the hour where you're sitting, Miss Anne, and listen to me without saying a word. Why, you'd never know it was the same man that we left on the beach this morning so angry at us."

"Oh, Jerry," exclaimed Jean, "you must

study the violin, for you play beautifully, and you will be famous some day, if you will only work hard. Don't ever stop practising, will you? I'll send you some books and music as soon as I get back to Boston to-morrow, and perhaps your friend will come this summer to help you, but if he doesn't, you must find some one else. This has been a splendid day, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. I wish you would come over to our house to-night and play with me. I play the piano, but I have always wished it had been the violin, for I love that music better than anything else. That last little piece you played, what was it called? All I could think of was a dancing wave. I'd like to buy it."

"There isn't any name to it; I made it up one day when I was out alone in the boat."

"Made it up, Jerry! Do you make up many such pieces?"

"Almost everything I play is what I have made up myself. I don't like the exercises in the book; they're too monotonous. I like to try to put into my violin the things I think most about; the waves, the sunlight, a moon-

light night, a gull flying, the colors you see in a sunrise or sunset, a foggy morning, my loneliness for my mother,—all those things, you know, that you wonder about. But I've talked too much about myself, let's change the subject. The wind's coming up, and perhaps we'd better make for home. It's a long way and it will be nearly six by the time we reach the river. I'm sorry that calm delayed us."

"Well, I'm not," said Polly, "if there hadn't been a calm we never should have known anything about your violin, or how well you play, or anything about yourself. But I'm hungry; let's eat that lunch you brought along for an emergency, Anne, and then we'll have more courage for the trip back. I, for one, hope we won't strike any more stiff breezes, for I can't say I enjoy sailing at an angle of one hundred and sixty degrees. A dead calm is better than that."

Every one seemed quite ready to eat, and by the time the food was all gone, they had made considerable headway toward home. Quiet seemed to have fallen upon them all, but perhaps they were thinking about the strange fate

that had placed such unmistakable talent in the heart of this poor fisher-boy. When they reached the wharf they found Mrs. Cockran pacing anxiously up and down awaiting their arrival. It had been a long day for her, and as hour after hour had passed without their return, she had begun to get very anxious. When they were in the house, they told her all about the day's experiences, and how Jerry had promised to come over in the evening to play with Jean.

It got to be very late before he put in an appearance, but they felt sure he would come as he had promised, and supposed he was probably being detained by his uncle. At last he arrived with his violin under his arm and a very tired expression on his careworn young face. But he played for over an hour with Jean's soft accompaniments to his own compositions, and the listeners sat spell-bound, as they had in the afternoon. When Mrs. Cockran finally felt obliged to tell the girls that they must go to bed or they would be in no condition for their early start in the morning, the music had to stop, and Jerry bade them

good-night, but not without a promise to Jean to keep up his practising in the exercise books she would send him, and to answer some letters he would receive from her after she had talked with Professor Leighton in Boston.

After the house had been locked up, and the good-nights were being said, Jean put her arms around Anne and Lois, and said softly:

“ Well, girls, I didn’t suppose so much could happen in three days. What do you suppose the next three weeks have in store for us? I can hardly wait. Can you? ”

CHAPTER XIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

“**N**O, Polly, I simply haven’t the time. I’d love to go with you,” said Jean one morning soon after their return from Black River, “but I must get in another afternoon of tennis practice. You see, the tournament begins day after to-morrow, and I’m really in no condition to play this year, but I do want that championship pretty badly. You see, it’s my last chance at it, and luck’s been against me the last three years. Haven’t you got a rabbit’s foot or a lucky penny or something that will remove the curse? I’d almost be tempted to come back another year for post-graduate, if I thought I could win it then. It’s awfully discouraging to be second best man, for every time I’ve kept in till the finish. I wonder what I can do to make the immortal gods smile on me just once.”

“There’s no question about your getting it

this year, Jean. No one else can hold a candle to you. And there's always been a good reason why you didn't win out before. First year you had Nathalie Lawton against you, and she'd been college champion two years; then next year you were just recovering from the measles; and last year you'd sprained your wrist just a little while before the tournament. Under the circumstances, I think, you did mighty well to stay in till the finals. No one else but you would have done it. But now you're in the pink of condition, and not one dangerous rival in the field. I'd be willing to stake anything I've got on you."

"You're certainly very positive of my ability, Polly, and I hope I'll come up to your expectations. But something seems to tell me it will be the same old story this year. I haven't any idea that I'll win."

But in spite of Jean's lack of confidence in herself she did win the tennis tournament, and won gloriously. Not for one moment during the preliminaries or the finals did any one doubt what the outcome would be, for from the beginning she played calmly and with a

stroke which was undoubtedly that of the winner, and she easily took the victory from Kate Goodrich, her opponent in the finals.

Every one in college rejoiced at Jean's success, because they knew how hard she had tried all four years, and how patient she had been in her hours of defeat. Cheer upon cheer arose at the end of the last set, and a long procession escorted her from the courts to the steps of Gamma Chi House, where they called insistently for a speech from the champion of the day. With a few simple words of appreciation she begged off, saying that there was so little time left before dinner that they would need it all to dress for the Student Government elections that evening. A little reluctantly, it must be confessed, the girls dispersed after a round of lusty cheers, and Jean and the house girls hurried to their rooms for the few moments before the call for dinner.

At a quarter before eight the chapel bell began to peal out solemnly in the still evening air. It was the signal for the whole college to assemble in the chapel to hear the announcement of the elections to Student Government,

the most coveted honors of the whole college world. Soon every seat was filled, the faculty and the seniors in cap and gown, in the front rows, and the underclass girls behind them wherever they could find seats. Upon the platform were the officers of Student Government, the presidents of the classes, secret societies and all college organizations, looking quite as dignified and inspiring as ever the faculty did, and against a much more festive setting, for flowers were banked in rank profusion wherever there was room for them. Every girl carried an armful of flowers, too, wild or cultivated, as the various pocketbooks allowed, and if one had looked carefully she might have seen that every person in the chapel either carried or wore some flowers.

Then as the clock struck eight, Delia Tuckerman, president of Student Government, arose, and coming to the edge of the platform, made a little speech of welcome, in which she briefly stated the purpose of the organization, its work during that year, and how each year the faculty and the retiring officers chose the new officers on the merits of general good scholarship and

all-around service to the college. At its conclusion she asked Miss Emerson to step forward and read the results of the election, and those whose names were read were invited to come upon the platform to be initiated into their new positions.

It was so still one could have heard a pin drop as the girls waited breathlessly for the first name to be read. It was not long in coming, for Miss Emerson seemed to feel the suppressed excitement of those in front of her, and said quickly:

“President, Mary Elizabeth Thompson; Vice-president, Grace Alton Vosburgh; secretary and treasurer, Alice Spencer Proctor.”

Before she could begin her customary little speech of congratulation, however, there arose deafening shouts of “Rah, rah, rah, Polly Thompson!” followed by just as vigorous ones for the other two girls. She was obliged to wait several minutes for the excitement to die down. Then, after speaking a few words, she took her seat again and the exercises continued.

The newly elected officers left their seats

and made their way to the platform in as dignified a manner as possible; but to have such an honor thrust upon one without a moment's notice rather "takes the starch" out of any one, and it requires some moments to regain one's usual composure. All those upon the platform arose as the three came up the narrow steps at the right hand side of the organ. Delia Tuckerman stepped forward, and shook hands with them most cordially, and passed them on to the others. Then she carefully explained the duties and responsibilities of each office, and declared them invested with full power to take the organization over into their hands. She took a large bunch of American Beauties which had adorned the pulpit desk, and dividing it into three parts, gave one part to each of the new officers. Then at a signal the rest of the girls formed a double line across the platform, and Delia motioned for Polly and Grace and Alice to follow her out of the chapel. The audience now arose and faced the central aisle. As the four honor girls passed through the line on the platform, the girls placed in their arms their own

bunches of flowers and threw garlands over their heads and shoulders, and as they passed down the main aisle, every girl in the audience threw her flowers on the floor or into the air until it seemed as though there were flowers everywhere. The mingled perfume of rose and lily and field flowers rose to the very ceiling, and cast its benediction over everything, as the concourse of girls followed the little group of officials, new and old, out of the chapel.

Just outside the door Jean ran up to Rosalie Warner, crying, "Rosie, dear, will you please ask the girls to wait in the living-room a few moments until I get home? There's something I want to say to them to-night; it won't take but a little while. Anne and I have got to stop at Miss Emerson's a minute to see about the reception. Oh, isn't it splendid about Polly! I can't get over it, to think of a Gamma Chi girl having the highest honor in the whole college, and our little Polly, too! Well, more of that later, but I must find her and tell her how happy we are. Don't forget to keep all the girls up, even if they do say

they were never so sleepy in their lives and want to go to bed. There's Polly now, but she's got so many round her it's no use trying to say anything for the present. If you see her first, give her my bestest."

Although Jean and Anne remained at Miss Emerson's much longer than they had expected, when they finally reached Gamma Chi house they found every girl in the big living-room apparently so excited over Polly's honor that sleep was the thing farthest from their minds. After the two girls offered their congratulations, Jean began:

"I won't keep you up much longer, girls, but there's one thing that just must be said to-night. As president of Gamma Chi, I want to tell you how much this election of Polly to the presidency of Student Government means to me and to the society. It means that the college and the faculty recognize that our society is worth something and that its members are working for the good of the college, and are living up to the high ideals that Miss Emerson constantly sets before us. You remember that after our hoodang last October

I called you girls in here as I have done to-night and told you how we were being criticized by certain girls of the college. I asked you to try to live down that reputation, which perhaps we deserved, during the year, and show our true worth to the world. Since then I have never spoken of the matter, but I have watched a splendid new feeling growing up among us. I want to thank you, one and all, for what you have done, and to tell you that I am the proudest girl in the world to be president of Gamma Chi to-night. It's my last opportunity to call myself president, for our annual election comes to-morrow, but I want you to know that I feel our first year off the campus in the Gamma Chi House has been one grand success, and that we have accomplished a great deal. The world at large will never know how many things, for most of them are those that one feels rather than those that one sees. Let's give one cheer for Mary Elizabeth Thompson, president of Student Government, and for the junior class, and join hands and pledge ourselves to her support, for the best

in the college, the best in our class, and the best in Gamma Chi!"

After this some one suggested that a cheer be given Jean, for every girl knew down deep in her heart that if Gamma Chi was strong and worth while, it was because of this strong, unselfish girl who had given so much of herself during the year to make the society what it was. Polly and the rest of the underclass girls grew a bit troubled at heart and choked down a sob when they thought of what the years to come would be without her. So the cheering began again, and it was very late before the lights were out and the last girl had gone to bed. It was a rather dubious beginning, for on the next day began the final examinations, which Anne called "The Reign of Terror."

They were the days when life out-of-doors was at its best, and to have been perfectly happy one should have lain all day on the green grass beneath some shady tree, listening to the song of a bird, or gazing dreamily at the blue sky. But instead, girls were spend-

ing every available hour from early morning until late at night cramming into their poor tired heads all that they should have been learning for months past. No matter how perfect the day or hot the night, there were always notebooks and text books and reference books to be thoroughly gone through and digested in an impossibly short time in order to go on to another subject.

Girls sat with ice-cold bandages round their aching heads, or drank strong coffee to ward off much needed sleep; some persuaded accommodating room-mates or friends to run down to the store and buy them cooling ices; others begged help with a Latin translation, or the copying of history outlines into notebooks, or the hearing of French verbs or English quotations. Every one wanted something — but most of all, they wanted the examinations to be over. Poor, discouraged little freshmen who wailed that they knew they never would pass in their mathematics, came to ask the upper class girls what they thought would happen if they flunked out, and was it an awful disgrace to come back and begin all over

again? Tired seniors were so anxious these last days for fear something at the last moment would snatch from them the much coveted diploma. And every one had a worried expression on her face which seemed to say, "Will they ever be over?"

But sad times, like glad times, must come to an end, and it was not long before the last girl had passed in her last little blue examination book "for better or worse." Then for two days before Class Day, Student Government rules were "off," and the girls could do exactly as they pleased, without asking permission of any one but their conscience, for of course, even under these conditions, girls were supposed to have moderation in everything, and to be guided by their sense of honor.

On the Thursday night preceding Class Day, just as the clock was striking midnight, Jean and Anne and the other Gamma Chi seniors in their black caps and gowns left the society house. Although it was very dark, if one had looked closely she might have seen that each girl carried in one hand a long white candle, and in the other a text or note book. Quickly

they made their way to College Hall, where they found most of the seniors already assembled. Soon all the candles were lighted, and a long line of seniors began a funereal march to the chant of a low dirge, down to the very edge of the campus, back of the Pond. Suddenly they stopped by the command of the class marshal, Blanche Whitney, before something which more closely resembled an ancient funeral pyre than anything else. Then a circle, several girls deep, was formed, and each girl held her lighted candle high. A match was struck and applied to the pyre, and a livid flame shot up into the air.

Then came a shout of "Our dead and buried past at Ashton; away with hated books forever! Sacrifices, sacrifices from every one to light the spirit of our departing greatness." And each girl threw the book she had been holding upon the fire; there was not time to see the titles of the books, but one could easily imagine them to have been worn-out "math." books or bethumbed histories and grammars, or closely written lecture notebooks, something evidently not worth keeping, but bearing the

traces of much use against the best wishes of the owners. As the books caught fire, the girls placed their candles on the ground and, joining hands, began to dance as wildly as any band of Trojans ever danced round the burning body of a dead hero. Shrieks and groans added to the wild orgy, but fortunately the mourners were so far away from the dormitories that none but a night watchman could have heard, and most of them were so familiar with Ashton traditions that they would have continued on their round with only a smile and a murmur, "Those crazy girls; up to some of their midnight pranks again."

The ceremonies must last as long as a book burned on the pyre, and only when they became a mass of embers did the girls seat themselves on the ground to watch, as was a long established custom, for the first signs of dawn. They had just settled themselves comfortably, and begun a round Robin of "The Book I Hated Most in College," when great drops of rain began to fall upon their heads and faces and threatened a change of program.

Wail upon wail arose: "Oh, girls, to-

morrow will be rainy! What shall we do? It's the first time the old tradition has ever been broken. It's always fair weather on Class Day. Oh, the play, the play! Everything will be spoiled!"

"But perhaps this is only a shower," said the class optimist. "Let's sing, 'It's Always Fair Weather on Class Day,' and perhaps the weather man will change his mind."

"Well," remarked Anne, "you can stay here for the rest of the night, if you want to, but I make a motion that we go back home. It's beginning to pour, and I'd much rather be in my own little bed waiting for the sunrise than up here in the rain. I got a sore throat the other night studying at the open window. It was the only place I could keep cool, and I don't want any more, or I won't be able to say a word to-morrow afternoon."

"I guess you won't need to, Anne," said Blanche Whitney, "if this kind of weather keeps up. Of course they'll have to postpone it, for who ever heard of having an out-of-door play in the rain. Wouldn't it be rich to have the actors and actresses and all the guests

strolling round under umbrellas! And then think of the costumes and the decorations!"

"Cheer up, girls," cried Bess Johnson. "Let's start along, and to keep up our courage we might sing our class songs. Won't our caps and gowns look fine in the morning?"

Everybody seemed quite willing to follow out Bess's suggestions, for the rain was fast permeating their thin summer clothes, and a college campus in the pouring rain between the hours of one and five in the morning is not the most attractive place in the world to sit, so abandoning the single line formation by which they had come, they rushed pell mell in the direction of their rooms singing as they went, "It's always fair weather on Class Day."

But in spite of their songs and prayers for fair weather, when they awoke next morning it was raining. Not in gentle little showers, but there was a steady driving rain, accompanied by a terrific wind, which had already strewn the ground with small branches from the trees and threatened damage to the larger ones. Not very promising, to be sure, for out-of-door festivities and summer gowns and

hats! The seniors were heartbroken, and with reason, for it was certainly contrary to all Ashton traditions of Class Day weather. Up to this year it had never been known to be so stormy that the outdoor events had to be given up; to be sure, there had been cloudy mornings or showers during the afternoon, but it had always cleared, and the time-honored tradition was passed down to the next class. Well might the graduating class ask what it had done that the weather should thus shower down its ingratitude upon them!

Every girl in Gamma Chi House was up early, for orders had been issued the night before that the house was to be cleaned up before the arrival of any of the guests, and every underclass girl had been appointed to some special work. They tried to be brave, but it was hard work to keep from looking out of doors at the weather and making remarks upon it. Of course they would get through the day somehow, but the joy of it was spoilt already and the one event to which everybody was especially looking forward,—

the presentation of "La Princesse Lointaine" out-of-doors in the late afternoon and early evening,—would have to be given up until another day.

When Anne and Jean came down stairs to breakfast in their middy blouses, Lois called out to them: "What are you going to wear to chapel, girls? If we wear our caps and gowns, it's good-bye to them forever. Of course we ought to wear them at our last chapel, but unless the faculty order automobiles for our transportation, I think it will be absolutely foolish. We can't possibly hold up umbrellas in this rain."

"Why not wear our rubber coats and hats," volunteered Anne. "It isn't very dignified perhaps, but it's the only safe way to get up to the chapel. We can telephone the dormitories, and tell the others and then we'll all be dressed alike, for every one owns a rubber coat. What do you say?"

"Fine idea, Anne," replied Bess Johnson. "Better telephone at once, for it's getting late. I expect to hear the bell any minute now. As

soon as you're through, come into the dining room for some breakfast. When are your people coming?"

"I don't expect any one to-day, Bess, except Mother and possibly one or two of her friends, but Jean has enough to make up and I'm going to help her out."

"Perhaps they won't come in this storm," said Jean. "However, I'm sure some of them will. Father and his party were coming over on the midnight last night, and they'll be out shortly after chapel. I'll have to use up most of the morning going to the station to get the different relays. Such luck! Did you ever hear of such weather?"

"Hush, Jean; don't you begin, or everybody else will follow suit. We've got to pretend we're the happiest people in the world, whether we really are or not."

"Happy! Why, I am happy, only I'm so sorry for all the people who will be disappointed and perhaps not come."

"I know one that will come anyway, Jean; if that's any consolation."

"Oh, do you, Bess? Well, so do I.

Father can always be depended upon, no matter what happens."

"And Bob, too?"

"Yes, Bob, too, Miss Inquisitive. Come, Anne, breakfast is ready, and everybody else seems to have eaten."

But just as the girls sat down, the chapel bell rang, so they jumped up without having eaten a mouthful, and hurried for their rubber coats, for it would never do to be late on the last morning of chapel, even though they might have been guilty of the same offense every other morning of the year. As they were about to open the outer door the bell rang. Jean opened the door, and found an expressman almost hidden from sight behind numberless florists' boxes. She signed the book, and then called the seniors to claim their various possessions. There were five for Jean, and one of them was simply immense. Opening it, she found dozen upon dozen of red carnations, and the girls looked at one another, and whispered:

"Oh, Jean, is it to-day?"

"You silly girls! Of course it's to-day;

it's Class Day, isn't it? But help yourselves; there are enough carnations here for us all and the tables besides."

"I should think there were, Jean; but do you imagine there are any red carnations left in Boston — or perhaps they came from Cambridge? Red is rather suggestive of Harvard, isn't it?" and Bess began to open one of her own boxes.

"Don't stop to put them in water now," said Anne, "for it will be a perfect disgrace to be late," and she led the little procession out of the house, and up the hill to the chapel. It was really with difficulty that they finally reached it, for the driving rain and wind made walking an effort, but once inside the gray walls they forgot the weather. This was the last time they would ever attend a chapel service together. They might come back as graduates, but never again could they feel it was their own particular service, and they hated to give up this rare privilege forever. Perhaps it was this feeling that made them sing every word of every verse of the hymns, that made them read so clearly every word of the

psalm and prayer, that made every eye fill with tears as Miss Emerson, in a few short sentences, bade them good-bye and wished them success in whatever phase of life they entered upon. As they silently walked down the aisle, every girl felt that although she was leaving the chapel and Miss Emerson behind her, there was something she had got from them both that never would leave her, even though the future might take her to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Jean and Anne and most of the girls went straight to the station, for the morning train would bring in the guests who were expected for the day. They were sure of their families' coming, because somehow one can always rely on fathers and mothers braving all kinds of difficulties to see their daughters graduate from college, or, for that matter, do anything worth while; and there's no one the daughters would rather have see them graduate, for a girl is generally prouder of her father and mother than any one else in the world. So, when the train stopped there were a large number of middle-aged men and women who

stepped off, with a smattering of the younger generation.

Jean caught sight of her father just alighting from one of the last cars, and pulling Anne by the arm she cried:

"Oh, there's Father and Tom and Mother and Connie and the nurses with the babies! Just think of Tom and Father both having baby girls! I'm pretty proud of them, I can tell you. But Anne Cockran, do I believe my eyes? That's Elizabeth Fairfax coming out with them! How in the world did they ever find her? She wrote she couldn't possibly get here until to-morrow, for the school committee didn't want to let her off even for one day. Isn't it splendid? I don't care now if all the rest of my guests stay away, I'm perfectly satisfied with this splendid showing."

"Oh, Jean, how about the red carnations? Wouldn't it be a shame not to thank that donor personally?"

"Don't worry, Anne; I intend to, but he's coming to-night. He couldn't possibly come before, even if it had been pleasant."

"Oh, you blessed family!" and Jean was

soon kissing one baby and then the other, until the fond fathers insisted that their offspring be conducted to a drier place than the station platform for the remainder of the greetings. Then after all were comfortably settled in the little station, the two men went out to see what could be done in the way of transportation; but the few station carriages had been already taken, so there was nothing to do but wait for their return. Mr. Cabot then conceived the brilliant idea of telephoning into Boston for the largest automobile to be had, and hiring it for the rest of his stay at Ashton. Of course it took some time for it to come out in the rain, but the little party didn't seem to mind the wait at all; at least the feminine portion didn't, for there was so much to talk over and ask about that time flew by unheeded, until, with a start, Jean exclaimed:

"Why, people, do you know that the chapel exercises began ten minutes ago. I wouldn't have believed it was after ten o'clock. Well, you'll have to give that up; that's all there is about it, for you can't go out in this rain. If anything, it's worse than it was when we

started. The auto isn't in sight yet, so if you don't mind I think we girls ought to start along. You can go right to the Inn where your rooms are reserved, and as soon as you can, come up to the chapel. No danger but what there will be plenty of seats to-day. But here's your tickets before I forget it. The blue are the yard tickets and the yellow the chapel. If you don't make the exercises come up to the house at lunch time, and we'll decide on the rest of the day later, after Miss Emerson makes her announcements. All I ask is that none of you say one word to me all day about the weather. Isn't much like the other Class Day you came to, is it, Tom? What a lot has happened to our family since then! Good-bye, everybody. Oh, Elizabeth, come over to chapel if you possibly can. Borrow somebody's raincoat at the Inn to put over your cap and gown, for of course you've got to wear one to-day."

"I'll try to, Jean, but I'm pretty wet now and it may take the rest of the morning to dry out. I'm just crazy to see you and the house and the girls. Mrs. Cabot and I have talked

together ever since we met. Wasn't it fortunate she saw me just as I was going through the gate at the station? Don't let me keep you another minute, but I do want to talk with you so. We'll have time to-morrow anyway. When is Class Supper?"

"To-morrow night in town at the Somerset, and you're down for one of the toasts. I've forgotten the subject, but Grace Taylor will tell you about it later. Isn't it a shame about Chrissie Newton; she isn't going to get her degree. Well, so long; more later, if I ever get a moment."

And Jean and Anne struggled up the hill again against the driving storm, and entered the chapel just as Miss Emerson was announcing that the Tree Exercises would be held in the gymnasium at two o'clock, and that the play would be postponed until the following afternoon at five o'clock if pleasant. If not, then on the first pleasant day. Everything else would be carried out as had been planned. The morning wore on as though it were the pleasantest of days, and the class orators and poets delivered their parts to the

few scattered guests with as much feeling and enthusiasm as though the building were crowded to the doors. One felt everywhere a brave attempt in the heart of every girl to make the best of it, and not let a little thing like a storm spoil the one class day of their college life. Perhaps the oft-repeated advice of Miss Emerson, "Be ready to meet every emergency," was bearing fruit sooner than she expected.

After the exercises were over Jean hurried down to the house and found her whole family, Elizabeth, Anna Robertson and her husband, Natalie Lawton, and a number of the old girls waiting to see her. Most of the others had their families and friends, too, so luncheon was a merry affair, for every one felt like members of the big Gamma Chi family. The rooms were literally abloom with the flowers that had been sent to the girls, and gave one the impression of being in a small conservatory filled with rare blossoms and perfumes.

At two everybody went up to the big gymnasium for the indoor Tree Exercises. It was

crowded, and became very close and warm; but the tree oration, the history and the prophecy were very clever, and the presentation of gifts to the underclasses so funny that it sent everybody off into gales of laughter, and restored the good humor that might otherwise have been lost over wet feet, or white dresses smirched in the attempt to reach the building. The spreads were served indoors instead of on the lawns and piazzas. As Polly observed later, "The one great advantage of the storm was that there was lots more food for the people who did come, and for the first time in my life I had enough lobster salad and ice-cream."

Shortly after five the rain and the wind ceased a little, and the guests decided it was the time for their departure, before another downpour, so they made a hasty exit, and the girls were left to begin preparations for the dance. Then for the first time Jean and Elizabeth were left to themselves, and they went to Jean's room and talked, just talked, to their hearts' content. Somehow Anne knew enough to keep away, for she realized

that as good friends as she and Jean had become in this last year together, still she had never quite been able to take Elizabeth's place in Jean's heart. But finally she came into the room and said:

"Why, girls, aren't you going to get ready for the dance? It's half past seven, and your men will be here before you know it. Isn't it splendid Dick can go with you, Elizabeth? Jean told me he was coming out with Bob. I've always wanted to meet your brother, for Jean has told me so much about him. Will he stay over for Commencement?"

"No, I wish he might, but he's going over to England on a cattle boat with some of the college boys, and starts to-morrow. But I expect my father and mother will come down Wednesday, and I want you to meet them. Have you a dance for Dick to-night? I haven't made out an order, so I'm relying on you girls sparing him as many as you can."

"Yes, indeed, he can have several if he wants them. I saved some out purposely, for I'm on the committee, and thought I ought to be looking out for things during some of

the dances, but if Dick doesn't mind my cutting the first half he can have as many as he wants. What are you going to wear, Elizabeth? Isn't Jean's dress a dream? I'm crazy to have her get into it. Do let me help you, Jean."

"All right, Anne, but it's so cozy here I hate to think of going out, even to a Class Day dance. I guess I'm getting old, but I'd much rather stay right here."

"Now, Jean Cabot, don't get into that frame of mind. You've simply got to go and go early, and stay till the last minute, for you're chairman of the whole thing, and how would it look for you to stay at home by your twosome, just because you and Bob Bowker are —"

"Anne, don't you say another word. I'll get ready immediately, and you can hook up my dress. Father has offered the automobile to all of us to-night, so we'll make use of it, and go in relays. We'll start as soon as Bob and Dick arrive, and you and Billy can go with us. Tell the other girls to be ready to start just as soon as the machine gets back."

Then the girls began to dress and by half after eight were ready for the dance. Jean's white chiffon, a present from her mother, was indeed beautiful, and in her arms she carried as many of the red carnations as she could hold. She had never been more beautiful than when she walked down the stairs to greet Bob and Dick; and as Bob took her hand in his and murmured, "Good evening, Lady of the Red Carnations," there was much more in his heart unexpressed than came from his lips, but he knew that his hours of waiting were fast drawing to a close, and that in a little while he could tell his secret to the whole wide world.

The dance was like all other dances to the happy young people, but to two of them at least it was the happiest one of their lives. And when it was all over, and good-nights were being said at the Gamma Chi House, Jean felt a little package being tucked into her drooping bunch of carnations, and she hurried away to her room to discover its contents. But she had only time to slip it into her dressing-table drawer before the room was filled



SHE HAD NEVER BEEN MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN WHEN SHE WALKED
DOWN THE STAIRS TO GREET BOB AND DICK.—*Page 292.*

with girls who had come to talk over the wonderful dance, and she waited impatiently for them to be done — and gone to their rooms. At last they departed, and she and Elizabeth were left alone, as Anne had decided to spend what remained of the night with Polly. But not until Elizabeth was in bed fast asleep did Jean find the opportunity she had been waiting for. Softly she put out the electric light and lighted a candle. Standing before her dresser she opened the little package and saw in a tiny white satin box a blazing diamond in a platinum setting. And on a little card she read:

“Good night, My Lady of the Red Carnations, I’m very, very happy to-night, but after the Class Supper I shall be the happiest man in the world.”

And slipping the ring upon the third finger of her left hand, Jean blew out the candle and crept into bed to try to sleep.

CHAPTER XIV

THE END OF IT ALL

THE long dining-room of the Somerset was filled with the hundred or more Ashton seniors on the Saturday evening following Class Day. Class colors decorated the walls and chandeliers, and great bowls of red carnations were on the tables, for Lois Underwood, who was on the committee of arrangements, had availed herself liberally of Jean's invitation to help herself to the generous supply of carnations which had been sent her. When the roll was called, not one girl was missing, for even those who already knew they would not receive the much coveted sheepskin had come. Was not Class Supper the most important event in all the festivities, excepting perhaps Commencement itself? There were no guests and no faculty present, for this was a supper solely for the survivors of the glorious graduating

class and for once, they could do as they pleased, how they pleased and when they pleased.

Blanche Whitney was master of ceremonies and she announced that the first number on the programme would be eating, not that she felt the girls really needed nourishment, for they had been feasted and dined and tea-ed for several days past, but as long as that was the ostensible reason for their gathering and paying several dollars apiece per plate, it seemed best to have that part over as quickly as possible. However, let it be said in passing, that the girls appeared to do full justice to everything set before them, and things disappeared as rapidly as they might have done had the girls been hours without food. Then came the toasts, and it seemed as though every subject, past, present and future, was touched upon, and for the last time the glorious achievements of their class were heralded to the sky. There never was and never could be such a class again! Long live its golden memories!

And when the last toast was finished, the

last cheer given, the last song ended, Blanche announced very slowly and distinctly,

“And now, girls, before we call the Class Supper a thing of the past, I have one last pleasant duty to perform. I am requested by the committee to ask all of the engaged girls of this glorious class to rise and run three times around the table, in order that we may know positively what we have long suspected, and offer our congratulations in a body before that privilege is extended to the world at large.” Then she sat down and awaited developments.

First, little Betty Anderson, whom no one in the world would have suspected of a love affair, arose very timidly and looked around the table as though for support from the others. There was a clapping of hands, and Cynthia Wood and Grace Taylor, room-mates in Wellington, arose and joined Betty; they were followed by Annettee Lee and Elsie Pemberton, and finally Jean arose from her seat and formed the end of the procession. As they started to run around the table,—a time-honored custom at Ashton,—the rest of the

girls with one accord jumped to their feet, and seizing the carnations at their places, threw them as the little procession passed by, and broke into, "For she's a jolly good fellow."

After the third time around the table the six girls sank exhausted into their seats, and showed their newly acquired diamonds to the admiring throng. Speeches were demanded, the names of the fortunate victims, when they had first met them, how long they had been engaged, when they were to be married, where they were to live, and all the other endless questions that come into silly girls' heads. Each girl told as little or as much as she pleased, and when it came Jean's turn she arose and said simply:

"I am very glad to announce my engagement to Mr. Robert Channing Bowker of Cambridge. Further than that I have nothing to say except that I start September first for Leipsic, Germany, to study for two years with Professor Leighton in the Conservatory. I hope you will all meet Mr. Bowker at Commencement."

It must be admitted that no one was surprised at the first part of Jean's announcement, for Bob's devotion had been too marked to escape observation; but the second part came like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, for she had told this to no one, not even Elizabeth or Anne. But more than one of her intimate friends said to themselves:

"She'll never do it. It's a long time before the first of September, and I don't believe any man to whom Jean is engaged will let her be away from him for any two years in Germany."

As the girls hastened to offer their congratulations to the heroines of the occasion, it was a general signal for the banquet to break up. There was the last train for Ashton to be caught, and the serenades to be given to the Faculty and the newly engaged girls all before midnight, for the next day was Sunday, and festivities must cease at the stroke of twelve. So there was a mad dash for the train, a half hour together on the campus, and then the class supper was a thing of the past.

Next day was Baccalaureate Sunday; on

Monday came the out-of-door play; Tuesday there was nothing to do but rest, and Wednesday morning dawned bright and clear for Commencement. All of the underclass girls, except a few juniors, who had been asked to usher at the exercises or serve at Miss Emerson's reception, had gone home so that their rooms might be given to the guests and the "old girls." The Gamma Chi girls and the alumnae were having their breakfast in the society house. The wicker furniture had been placed on the broad piazzas and under the trees, and the sunlight danced merrily on the delicate glass and china. This was the origin of another tradition, for Jean's motion had just been carried that hereafter every Commencement morning all the Gamma Chi grads, old and young, should have breakfast together at the society house.

It was so pleasant there in the warm sunshine that they almost forgot the more serious duties of the day until the old chapel bell began to call them to the hill for the Commencement exercises. The day was simply perfect; it seemed as though the weather man were a lit-

tle ashamed of his actions on Friday, and was trying to make up for them with this beautiful, balmy day. The grounds were thronged with guests and "old girls" enjoying the beauties of the campus. All roads led to the chapel, and by ten o'clock it was crowded to the doors. Then as the organ pealed out the Processional a long line of seniors in cap and gown, with their arms full of flowers, preceded by the faculty, wended its way through the crowd and down the center aisle to the front rows of seats. After the faculty had taken their places on the platform, the music stopped and the seniors sat down and waited for the exercises to begin.

Of course every girl listened most attentively to the oration of the day, or at least had the appearance of so doing, but undoubtedly every one was wondering how long it would be before the learned doctor would finish and the presentation of the diplomas begin, for, after all, the most anticipated event is to grasp in one's hand the much coveted and long desired sheepskin. At last Miss Emerson gave the signal for them to rise and

introduced the president of the trustees who was to award the diplomas and announce the honors. After a long preamble he finally was ready to consult his lists, and read first the elections to Phi Beta Kappa, the honor society of the college. Of the eight girls chosen, Elizabeth Fairfax was one, and every Gamma Chi girl secretly rejoiced with her, for it meant that Elizabeth's work had been for three years the best in the whole college.

Then followed a long list of honors, and Jean could hardly believe her ears when she heard among the "cum laudes," Jean Cabot — French. She grasped the rail in front of her, and for a moment turned deathly pale. To think that she was to receive one of the highest honors the college bestowed, she who had come to college with no definite purpose in mind, but just to please her father and brothers. And although she had a certain pride in this honor, she felt that she owed a great deal to Elizabeth and Tom and Mrs. Cabot for the strong influence they had had freshman year in giving her the right start and in standing by her at the times when she

most needed their support. It seemed as though she must rush to them now, and thank them for what they had done and ask them to share this honor with her. But she did not even look around at them, and stood staring straight ahead, beyond the faculty, beyond the trustees, at the stained glass window above the organ, and not until Professor Leighton struck the opening chords of the march did she realize that it was time to go forward and receive the diploma from the hands of Miss Emerson. Suddenly her mood changed, and she found herself smiling back at Miss Emerson, as she felt the thin white roll of parchment put into her outstretched hands, and she came down from the platform quite herself again, and, looking out into the audience with a hurried glance, caught the smiles of congratulation from her little family group at the right of the center aisle. It was almost all over now; all that remained was the marching and cheering, the Commencement Dinner, Prexy's reception and then — well, she didn't want to think of the "then" just now, for

there were too many other things to occupy her mind.

After the class song the little procession of seniors and faculty filed out of the chapel into the radiant sunshine, and, preceded by the band, started on their last march around the campus. All the guests were invited to join them, and forming two by two, fell in behind the leaders until the ranks were quite eight hundred strong. Slowly, for they were loath to leave it all, they wound their way in and out among the trees, stopping here and there where fancy prompted them, for a last view of some favorite bit of country, or a cheer for one of the college buildings. At last they came to the gymnasium, and started slowly into the great room, and began to fill the long tables which reached from one end of the room to the other. When every one of the eight hundred guests had found a place, they all sat down, and the waiters brought on the steaming dishes. It seemed to take a long time for every one to satisfy the "pangs of hunger," but finally Miss Emerson rapped on the table

for silence, and introduced one after another of successful alumnæ, who sang the praises of noble Ashton and acknowledged how much they owed to their Alma Mater. Then when the last one had finished, Miss Emerson made several announcements relative to financial matters and concluded by saying:

“And now, friends and alumnæ of Ashton College, I have a last announcement which fills me with the greatest joy. The Gamma Chi society during the past year has raised five hundred dollars which they offer to the college with the suggestion that it be used as a scholarship during the coming year. To my knowledge it is the first time any girls here have done such a thing, and we wish our appreciation to be shown them for the generous motives which have prompted such an action. They have made no suggestions as to how the fund shall be bestowed, so the faculty and the trustees have taken that matter into their own hands. One of their own society who received her degree to-day finished the required work in three years instead of four, and during the past year has worked hard and faith-

fully in an academy near her own home. We have known that she wished to continue her studies and obtain her master's degree, so, in consideration of this and her most excellent character and standing, we offer the sum of five hundred dollars to Miss Elizabeth Frances Fairfax, and in addition to the scholarship, extend to her the invitation to assist in the history department during the next college year."

As Miss Emerson sat down, the old building echoed and reëchoed with cheers and the clapping of hands. If one had been watching the Cabot family, she might have seen Mr. Cabot whispering earnestly to his wife. In a moment she rose to her feet, and said in a trembling voice, "Madam President, may I add just a few words to your splendid speech? If the faculty and trustees will accept the same, I wish to offer each year, as long as I shall live, five hundred dollars to be called the 'Gamma Chi Scholarship,' to be bestowed upon some worthy girl who is working for her master's degree. It is not necessarily to be given to a Gamma Chi girl, unless, as in the case to-

day, she especially deserves it. Thank you," and she sat down amid deafening applause. Of course Miss Emerson was only too glad to accept such a generous offer, and replied for the trustees and faculty in her usual pleasing manner, and concluded by inviting everybody to her annual Commencement reception from four to six o'clock in her home on the Row.

Nearly all availed themselves of the opportunity, for it was a pleasure to be in the quaint little English house with its charming air of cheer and hospitality. The crowds gradually wended their way there, stopping now and then for friendly handshakes, or renewing acquaintances, or visiting dormitories and society rooms. Miss Emerson had insisted that Mrs. Cabot stand in the receiving line, for a good many of the old girls who were back wanted to see her more closely than the Commencement Dinner had allowed, so with the president of the *alumnæ* and the president of the senior class, she and Miss Emerson took their places, and stood for several hours greeting old friends and new. Whenever one of

the girls, and most of them did, asked about the new baby, Mrs. Cabot would smile and reply that she was upstairs, adding that if they wished, they might go up into Miss Emerson's room and see her. Every girl went, and as they entered the room, they generally saw the baby sitting on the floor throwing blocks at her fond father or the nursemaid, and they stayed to admire as long as time and space allowed. And pleased as the girls were to greet Mrs. Cabot again, it must be whispered that most of them seemed even more so to see her charming daughter, a prospective Ashton student. Jean was very proud of her new sister, too, and hovered around as much as she could, but being in charge of the refreshments and servers downstairs, she felt it necessary to spend most of her time there; although inwardly she begrudged every moment that took her away from her family.

For now the Day of Days was almost over; in a few hours the family were to start back to New York, where they were to stay with Tom until the first of July, and then start for Long Island, where he had just built a sum-

mer bungalow. Tom had invited her, too, but all her plans were made for the summer in Maine, and the only time she would have with her family would be the few days before the boat sailed in September.

Soon the last guest had said good-bye, and the Cabots and Miss Emerson and her intimate friends were left to themselves. Just as they were settling down to peace and quiet, Tom came rushing in, and announced that he had received a telegram from New York which would necessitate his taking the evening train instead of the early one next morning as they had originally planned. He suggested that the others accompany him, and after much deliberation they decided to do so, and hastened to the Inn to make preparations. When they were all ready Jean and Bob went in town with them, and as Elizabeth was going about the same time she also made one of the party. It was hard to say good-bye, but the thought of a meeting at the end of the summer cheered things up a little. After the long train had disappeared from sight Jean and Bob went back to the hill, but considerate Bob left early

though perhaps reluctantly, because he knew how tired Jean was after all the excitement and hurry of the week.

Next morning Jean was up very early, for there was the packing to be done and all the last things to be attended to. Anne and Rosalie, Bess and Lois were to leave that afternoon with Cousin Nan Robertson for the summer in Maine, but Polly and she were to join them the following Monday. Polly had been persuaded to join a Junior week-end party at Gloucester the day before, and Jean was to remain over for Harvard Class Day and the attendant festivities. Bob's mother, who had been spending the winter in Cambridge to be near her son, had invited Jean to be her guest until Monday, and it had not taken much coaxing to persuade her to accept. She helped everybody else pack, and left her own work till the last, for she declared she would rather come back and do it after the others left. By one o'clock the last trunk was locked and strapped, and the girls hurried for the train, and as usual, caught it at the last minute. Mrs. Robertson met them at the North Sta-

tion, and they soon boarded the Portland train. Jean stood outside their car and listened to all the final directions about how and when to get to Belmont Center, and promised to do so many things for everybody that she could not have done them all if she had taken all summer. Then the whistle blew, the long train started, and she stood and waved her hand until it was out of sight.

Turning she was surprised to find herself face to face with Bob.

"Why, Bob, I didn't expect to see you until to-night. How did you happen to get off? I thought you had lectures all the afternoon."

"I did, but a pressing business engagement called me in town, and I couldn't resist coming down to the station to see the girls off."

"Well, you didn't see them off, after all, did you? Too bad you couldn't get here sooner."

"Oh, I've been here some time, but I'm perfectly satisfied to see one girl off for Cambridge, for I've come to take you to the game. We can see the last innings, anyway, even if we do miss the first of it."

"But my packing, Bob, when will it be done?"

"Never mind about that, dear; Mother and I'll go over to-night and help you. We can't miss the most exciting game of the year for a little thing like packing."

"But I'm not dressed for a game. I had to hurry so at the last minute with Anne's trunk that I didn't have time to change my dress."

"You look well enough to suit me, Jean, and as I'm the only one to be considered these days, you needn't worry about it. Let's hurry, and get the Cambridge subway."

So they went to the game, and, true to his promise, Bob and his mother did go out to Ashton that evening and helped Jean pack. Then all went back again to Cambridge, where Jean enjoyed every minute of the gayeties that centered round the historic yard in the next three days. On their last evening together she and Bob were strolling slowly back and forth in the quaint little rose garden at one side of Mrs. Bowker's house, watching the moon as it gradually rose high in the sky. It was almost time for good-byes to be said; there would be

no time for them in the morning, as an early start must be made.

Jean was saying, "Bob, do you suppose you can come down to Belmont this summer? We'd love to have you come."

"To be sure, Jean, but you know I'm to be very busy all of July with the summer courses, and I can't get away then. It'll have to be sometime in August, but I'll make it as near the first as possible. Do you suppose by that time the girls can spare you to come over to Boothbay with Mother and me? If I run off with you, they can't say anything, can they?"

"But you wouldn't do that, Bob?"

"Well, I won't promise what I'll do. Wait and see. Wait and see."

Jean must wait, but both she and her girl friends would have been very greatly surprised could they have foreseen what actually would occur within a few months, replete with incidents, as will be shown in the concluding volume of this series, "Jean Cabot at the House with the Blue Shutters."

THE END

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